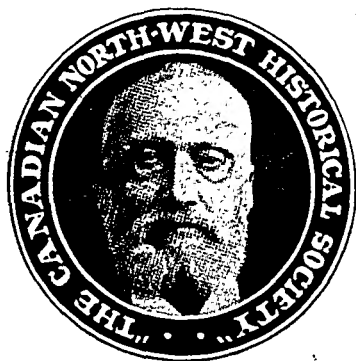


CANADIAN NORTH-WEST
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PUBLICATIONS

Chapters in the North-West History Prior
to 1890 Related by Old Timers



Fifty Years on the
Saskatchewan

BATTLEFORD
SASKATCHEWAN

Vol. I., No. V.
1929

Canadian North-West Historical Society

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THE AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

1. To collect and save the life sketches and historical stories of our pioneers, also the documents which throw light on the West's development prior to 1890.
2. The publication of historical works which contain the original stories of the pioneer. All the stories relating to an historical event will be edited in one publication and will provide an up-to-date source history of the Prairie Provinces. The members will receive the publications of Volume I, of five or six publications, on payment of the subscription of \$5.00. A special offer of Life Subscription of \$25.00 is being offered for a short time.
3. The Historical Archives at Battleford contain books, maps, pamphlets, relics, documents relating to North-West History, for use of the research student.
4. This society will assist in the publication of historical works for individuals and other societies, and it has secured the assistance of Western history men to assist in this research.
5. Historic spots are marked and historic interest in these is created. Public meetings are held to further this work.
6. This is the West's urgent problem. Save the Source History and Honor the Pioneer.

FIFTY YEARS ON THE SASKATCHEWAN

Being a history of the Cree Indian domestic life and the difficulties which led to serious agitation and conflict of 1885 in the Battleford locality as written by Robert Jefferson after fifty years' research and service.

FOREWORD HONORABLE JAMES G. GARDINER

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The Trail from England to Red Pheasant's Reserve, Battle River
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PART III

A Period of Agitation and Conflict Including the Activities
of Poundmaker, Big Bear, Riel, and the Fateful Events
of '85.

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CANADIAN NORTH-WEST HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
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James G. Gardiner

Foreword

A cultural manifestation, such as that which has found expression in the movement to "Save the Source History and Honor the Pioneer", is a laudable and eminently gratifying thing in a young people and in a young province.

Saskatchewan's very youth suggests to the casual thinker a history brief and, therefore, colorless as recent history, in the distortion of near perspective, usually appears. But—there is another Saskatchewan antedating the formation of the province, whose soil bore the imprint of native and exploring feet; a soil smeared with the red blood of rebellion; a soil which gradually, if reluctantly, yielded its fruits to pioneer travail. It is this earlier Saskatchewan upon which, in the main, the Canadian North-West Historical Society focusses its attention and into which it probes the finger of research.

Some episodes in the history of this earlier Saskatchewan, elemental and romantic in character, still are of record in the memories of living men. It is part of the self-assumed task of the society to ensure the preservation of these records that posterity may benefit from the lesson they teach and the inspiration they give. Beyond these, however, are other passages in the history of the province lying in a period dating from the advent of the white man to the territory now known as Saskatchewan. The records relating to this period gradually are being revealed—and in this process of revelation the society is doing an inestimable service to present and succeeding generations.

More remote still is that primal period in the history of the province when the Saskatchewan prairie was ranged by nomadic, aboriginal tribes. Concerning this period the records, essentially, have been woven into tribal lore and can only be unravelled and preserved by enlightened and meticulous study of the customs, language and traditions of the tribes themselves.

The Cree Indians, perhaps more than any others, were identified with the early history of Manitoba and Assiniboia to the banks of the Saskatchewan. Consequently, the present study of the Cree Indian, published herewith by the society, is a valuable contribution to the historical background of the province of today. Given the stamp of approval by a competent

critic, declared by him to be an "important and authoritative work on the subject", the study now published under the title "Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan" should commend itself to all members of historical societies. Not only that, it should commend the work of the Canadian North-West Society to every resident of Saskatchewan who loves his homeland and particularly to those who revere the memory of those hardy pioneers who built so solidly the foundations upon which the province of today is erected. The Saskatchewan Government, appreciative of the work of the Society and in endorsement of it, is assisting in the publication of this booklet.

JAMES G. GARDINER.

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*THE TRAIL FROM ENGLAND TO RED PHEASANT'S
RESERVE, BATTLE RIVER 1876-1878*

*The Start—Manitoba—Pioneering—Off to the North-West—
Battleford—Red Pheasant's Reserve—The Sun Dance.*

THE START—

The importance of the beginning of any undertaking—of the time, the circumstances, and so forth, has been impressed on me by a life-long experience; so, that I may render this narrative complete and comprehensible, I will commence with a short sketch of the events that brought me to the Decision, the Time and the Place and rendered all that followed possible.

I was born in England—on Tyneside—of a family in good circumstances, sea-faring for many generations, and received a fair, indeed I may say a superior education, since it was intended I should learn Civil Engineering and was prepared accordingly.

It came to pass, however, when I was about eighteen years of age, that a connection of mine—a cousin—becoming engaged to be married, and seeing no suitable prospects open to him in England, determined to break the strings that bound him to the cut-and-dried and unpromising life in the Old Land, and try his fortune in some newer country. His family had of late years suffered severe reverses, and his parents had not long survived the changed conditions, so that he and his brother had none of the ties that make emigration a serious matter to the average person, and cause thoughtful weighing of "the ills we have" against those we "know not of". He chose the logical course. First, he thought of going to the Fiji Islands, which had been recently annexed. Some trivial thing, however, turned his attention to Canada, and more for the sake of adventure than anything else, and because he desired a companion, I agreed to join him. Before we were ready to start, a third lined up with us, and, it having fortunately occurred to us that we had a slight acquaintance with a young fellow supposed to be settled in Manitoba, we unanimously chose that province for our objective.

This idea of mine ran directly counter to the views my parents had fondly entertained as to my future, and they did everything to discourage the enterprise. Everything was against it—nothing was for it; not a single argument supported it. Obstinacy and confidence in myself were always said to be my dis-

tinguishing characteristics, and my father finally relented to the extent of providing funds little more than sufficient to carry me to my destination, hoping thereby that I would quickly become disillusioned, and be ready enough to return home. My excuse is that I was young and foolish, and it was so written in the book of fate.

Once decided, we wasted no time. We booked our passage by the "Allan Line", and, since we had determined on a strictly economical programme, took second class tickets—intermediate, it was called at that time. This was early in the spring of 1876. Our equipment was quickly got together, and included everything our imagination or reading suggested might come in useful, and it is unnecessary to say that rifles and revolvers and shotguns and bowie knives were not omitted. We were bound for a wilderness, and though my companions intended to "settle", game must be plentiful, and its pursuit provided for. Clothes, too, for Canada was a cold country, we took in great store.

We journeyed to Liverpool, and went on board the "Polynesian". We were "emigrants" and tried to live up to the part, but the inspection of our quarters brought to our notice various unpleasant conditions that had not occurred to us when we made up our minds to rough it. Eventually, we reconsidered the question, and resolved that, while very careful expenditure was both salutary and necessary for people in our situation, yet we must draw the line somewhere, and even economy warranted our giving two pounds each to two petty officers for the use of their cabin. These philanthropists also introduced us to somebody from the cook's department, who, for the consideration of a further two pounds each, undertook to provide us with cabin fare throughout the journey.

We were fourteen days between Liverpool and Quebec owing to trouble with an ice field, so, as it happened, we got value for our money. I may state, by the way, that what impressed me most during the sea voyage was the amount of food thrown overboard, and the cheapness of tobacco; the first accounted for by the low prices in Canada, where all supplies were bought, and the second owing to getting it out of Bond, duty free. I was not seasick during the voyage and enjoyed the trip immensely. Yet I could not forget the misery of those less fortunate; how they sprawled in every direction on the decks, not caring whether they lived or died.

But, for them as for us the voyage came to an end, and we landed at Quebec. We tarried there just long enough to

ascertain whether it were true that in the saloons one was perfectly free to fill one's glass with as much whiskey as it would hold for no greater a price than a small dose would cost. It was incomprehensible, but it was a fact. We were booked right through to Manitoba, and having committed ourselves to the charge of the corporation who undertook the job, the exigencies of our contract and the inexorable train hurried us off—and on—so that we rushed when we fain would have tarried, and saw nothing but scenery till we came to Sarnia, where we had to trans-ship to boat for the passage of The Great Lakes to Duluth. The line ran through a wooded wilderness for the most part, with an embryo city here and there, and everywhere a most depressing sameness, and a perpetual and monotonous chorus of frogs. Under the guidance of the well informed, we had laid in quite a store of eatables for the train journey—for it was an immigrant train—with which we amused ourselves during the long ride, yet we were quite ready for a good meal at the periodical stopping places along the road. We were young, and English, and just through a sea voyage.

A further proof that we were what, in the West are called "easy marks", was given at Sarnia, where we were again held up, and got better berths and improved service for a consideration. But fortune stood behind us still, for when we came almost in sight of Duluth, the boat, which was the first of the season, remained icebound with the shore on the near horizon, for ten days, so that, though we had to put up with reduced rations at the last, the steamboat company did not make very much out of us.

When the question of food became of consequence, the skipper talked of sending a party to the shore, apparently with the idea of lightening the demands on the commissariat, it was headed by one of the mates, and as I was dying for something to put a little variety into living, I volunteered to join the party. A stern wind for many days had drifted all the ice to the west end of the lake; this froze each night quite hard; the shore was reckoned about ten miles distant, and could be reached in a day. Every man carried a short board, for passing places where the ice was soft, and a start was made early in the morning. I entered on the undertaking with the light heart of the ignorant, and during that awful journey, I often wished I had left well enough alone. The shore was twenty miles or more instead of the estimated ten, and it took forty-eight hours to make the land. Also it was a very sorry party that made it, a wet, a hungry and a miserable party. On the fourteenth day of the trip, the west wind blew clear a passage and the boat came

to Duluth, which was then a mere outpost of civilisation. Here, was not much of interest, except that it gave us our first illustration of what is to be contended with in man's effort to subdue nature, and found a city in the wilds. Thunder Bay, we had seen, but that assemblage of huts showed no sign of ambition. It might always have been; it might continue to be, but it gave no indication to strangers of any aspiration to greatness.

At Duluth, we again trans-shipped to make the fourth stage of our journey by rail to Fisher's Landing, on the Red Lake River. Here we traversed a rough, unsettled country, gradually changing into docility from rocks and chasms to the fertile lands of northern Minnesota. Fisher's Landing was well named. It consisted of an improvised wharf, and what they called a "hotel". Red Lake River is a tributary of the Red River, narrow and winding, commandeered for the time being, to connect the end of the rails with the boat line on Red River. While we waited for the arrival of the boat, a plausible prestidigitator amused his leisure at our expense, for a couple of hours, illustrating the vagaries of the "three card trick". He looked rustic and simple, and handled the cards clumsily, but he knew a great deal more than we did. It cost us something to find that out. Indeed, one of my partners lost all his money and his watch and chain before his confidence waned sufficiently to allow himself to be dragged away from such a seductive opportunity. The trip hence to Winnipeg enabled me to make the acquaintance of Mennonites, who more than shared accommodations with us. As a people they were not prepossessing; they were a ragged, dirty lot. But time has proved their worth as settlers; they took up land in Manitoba and have since fought their peaceful way through despite and contumely to wealth and what is called civilisation.

At this period, Winnipeg, as a city, or indeed as a town, was not much to speak of. There was practically only the one street—Main Street—with one or two short offshoots towards the river, which winds a serpentine course through a long and wide plain of clay from the Boundary to Lake Winnipeg. The banks vary in height from twenty feet down to nothing, and seem almost to offer inducements to periodical floods. The streets were unpaved, native mud; like rock when dry, and next to impassable when wet. There were sidewalks of boards for foot passengers. I recollect one occasion, when I had to make my way on foot from the town to the "settlement". I started just after a thunder shower, and had to take off my shoes and stockings and tramp barefooted. The mud is of a gluey consistency,

and more and more adheres to the boot till lifting the foot means lifting pounds of dirt at each step. Though Winnipeg was not large, yet it numbered among its prominent citizens some enterprising persons. Everybody fastened upon us, to ask us questions, and to offer us advice, generally wanting to sell us something they said we could not do without. One man tried to sell me a lot on Main Street for eighty dollars, but it did not take much consideration to turn down the proposal. We had no other wish than to get to the end of our journey as quickly as possible, and these solicitous attentions took away any pleasure we might have got by making a stay in Winnipeg. We escaped eventually without much damage, and, as the person to whom we were going, in the first place, lived on Lake Winnipeg, we took passage on a small steamboat that plied on the river, and landed at Selkirk.

At this period, Selkirk was one of those improvised towns that mark a step in some corporate undertaking, and was distinguished only as the stepping off place for the trans-continental railroad that was slowly building west from Lake Superior. Here, apparently, the modified civilisation of Manitoba ended, and we were thrown on our own resources if we wished to penetrate further into the country. We were still sixty miles from our objective, and could get there only by water, so we hired a "skiff"—a small flat bottomed boat—with a man to row it, and embarked on the Red River. The "settlement" (that is the Red River Settlement) on each side of the river continues for six or eight miles below Selkirk, where the banks are too low, and the dry land merges into "swamp", which again merges into lake. We had left all our baggage behind us at Selkirk, and travelled light. It was a beautiful day, the river wide, smooth and impressive in its strangeness, and someone else was doing the work, so there was nothing to prevent us enjoying the trip, and we reached our destination just as the sun went down on a day in the beginning of June.

MANITOBA

What I expected to find at the end of my journey. I do not now know, indeed I doubt whether I had ever any definite ideas on the subject, but I well remember that all the pleasant feelings produced by the journey were rudely scattered by the sight of a man with nothing more than underclothes on, coming down to the shore to bid us welcome. This shock was closely followed by another, when, after the excitement of arrival had subsided, and we were invited to partake of refreshment—there was no sugar for the tea. There were minor disappointments

between these shocks, for the whole surroundings had such a bedraggled, uncared-for look, that I wished I were safely out of it. This might be "settling", but certainly not the kind one boasts of or is envied. Virgin bush shut in the "shack" on all sides beyond the little clearing which served for a small garden. The soil was waterlogged, being but little above the level of the lake: and, so far as I could perceive during my short stay, our host was more of a fisherman than farmer, and lived on what he obtained from the water rather than from the earth. I had yet to accustom myself to an exclusively fish diet, and I was in no mood to start; one of my companions was similarly minded, so we left the first chance we got, and returned to "The Settlement". Here, at a boarding house much in vogue at the time, kept by a Halfbreed named Bird, we rusticated for the summer. This place was literally a nest of young Englishmen, fellows who hired with surveyors every summer, and returned to hibernate at this convenient stopping-place when work failed them. The Birds were good-natured, easy-going people, and their never failing welcome to all, money or no money, had, I suspect a good deal, to do with the popularity of the house. Here, plenty reigned, and their board bills troubled them little. They paid when they were able, or not at all.

With one of these soldiers of fortune I had a real taste of adventure. The man's name was Ogilvie, and we were both spoiling for something to do, so a visit to our friends at the lake presented the appearance of a diversion. Our conveyance was a "dug-out"—a tree some eighteen inches thick, and ten or twelve feet long, hollowed out, sharpened at the ends, that is, roughly shaped to a boat. A blanket, and a few carrots, pulled, as one might say accidentally as we passed through the garden to the canoe, was all we took with us, since we expected to reach our destination that same night. Hardly had we started, when a thunderstorm came up; the rain fell in sheets, till we were not only wet through, but could hardly bale the water out of the canoe fast enough to keep it from sinking. The Red River, for twenty miles before it empties into Lake Winnipeg, flows through a low, flat country; all that separates the water in the river from the water on the land on each side of it; is the banks of sand, washed up by the tide, and only a few feet wide. The thunderstorm passed on, but the rain continued to pour steadily, so, as we were in constant danger of being swamped, we put to shore to await more element weather. In the willows that stud these sandbanks, we sought shelter, hanging our blanket over a stick, roof-wise, to shed the water. We were soaked; the willows were too small and green to make a

fire; so we crouched on our haunches, silently munched a few carrots for pastime, and waited till better weather or daylight should come to release us. Needless to say, we did not sleep. At break of day, it still rained, and a strong wind from the north chilled us to the bones. There was nothing for us but to go on. The north wind, in this flat country, turns the tide up the river, and it was with infinite difficulty we reached the mouth of the west channel. The wind had churned the waters of the lake up so that it was impossible for negotiation by our little craft, so we perforce landed at the last point on the river, to wait till the water should be calm enough to allow us to make the remaining few miles of our journey. We finished the carrots for supper, and, after tying the canoe, so that it should not be washed away, slept as best we could under the willow bushes. Next morning, though it had ceased raining, the wind still raged, and, what was worse, the rising water had so encroached on our little camping place as to leave only room to turn round in, and we had to wade out to where our canoe was tied—fortunately, well tied—to bring it within reach in case we had to use it. A wind like this generally continues three days; this one followed the rule; and during our sojourn on that sand bank, we never got lonely. There was too much to think about. On the third day, the wind went down in the evening, but, as the heaving waters of Lake Winnipeg still forbade our taking the usual route; as we had eaten nothing for two days; and as we had stayed as long as we wanted to stay, we launched out into the swamp on the land side of the sand-bank, thus, partly wading through water two to six feet deep, and partly paddling or punting where the grass was not too thick, we came safely to firm ground some six or eight miles from our starting place. Whence, a short walk brought us to our destination; a short stay sufficed us; and we returned again to The Settlement, and to contented comfort.

About this time, one of my fellow adventurers, converted to the idea that pioneering was devoid of charm, left for the States; the other, who had no choice in the matter, picked out a place near the lake as a homestead, and started to work. For me, that object had no attraction, so I stayed in The Settlement, hoping for something to do. But, I was a stranger in the country, and did not know how or where to seek it.

In those days there was little or no accretion to the population of Manitoba. The Rebellion was still fresh in people's minds; the country was not advertised; and there was no easy way of getting there. The Canadian Government had taken hold of the trans-continental railway, and were making very slow

progress. A start, but not a very vigorous start, was made after the Rebellion, at getting the country surveyed, preparatory to settlement, and a number of young adventurers had drifted in with survey parties. But these had no intention of staying, they were so-jourmers merely, and when work stopped, drifted again to some other place. That summer, survey work had, for some reason or other, been halted and I could find nothing in that line to do, while other occupation there was none. I had quite a sum of money left yet, so I loafed the summer through, wearing my heart out in impatient impotence, but, at the same time assimilating a fair amount of experience.

The Red River Settlement of those days was an almost perfect Arcady. The land-level as a table on each side of the river was parcelled off into narrow strips, a few chains wide and two miles long, so that for sixty miles or so below Winnipeg the houses would be about seventy-five or a hundred yards apart. This made for sociability, which, under the system of land division throughout the West, is sadly wanting. Each family kept a cow or two, and was therefrom provided with butter, cheese, and beef; shoes, also, by the way, for they tanned their own leather. Each family also raised enough wheat for home consumption—in favorable years a little more—and there were several mills along the river, worked by water. Many families kept sheep; carded and spun the wool, and either made clothes for themselves or had them made by local artisans. During the summer, in a leisurely manner, they sowed, reaped and made hay for the winter's use. In the fall, they might go down to Lake Winnipeg, and in a week or so, kill their supply of whitefish. So, when the short days came, they gave themselves up to enjoyment—dancing and making merry—till spring and satiation made the change to more matter of fact occupations both needful and welcome. A few years before this, annual hunting parties left for the prairie to obtain buffalo meat but the big game had retired far to the West now, and was out of reach. The people appeared quite contented, because they had the best of everything they knew of; and none could acquire much more than his neighbor, no matter how thrifty or avaricious. They were poor, but only by comparison, and the means of obtaining a living always remained to even the laziest, when they should be sufficiently chastened by want. They had their virtues, and they had their faults, both regulated by surrounding circumstances.

The lower part of the settlement—that is from Selkirk downstream—was supposed to be an Indian Reserve, but the

land, at the time of the appropriation had nearly all passed by purchase into private hands, so that trouble occasionally crept in, even here. The Indians were Swampies—a sort of cross between Saulteaux and Cree-Northern Indians, fish-eaters and fur-catchers, hunters and boatmen. These people supplied the Hudson's Bay Company with crews for their annual summer trips. They were sturdy and faithful voyageurs, without much taste for an agricultural life. But, the waters teemed with fish and the woods with fur, and "sufficient to the day is the evil thereof".

When immigration crept into the country, the Halfbreeds wilted before it; they could not go the pace. Temptation overwhelmed them; they gradually sold out and took the remnant of their possessions to the Saskatchewan Valley, where the lure of extravagance and dissipation promised to leave them undisturbed for a while.

In the settlement, I remained all summer, paying board at the rate of three dollars a week. The approach of winter, and the necessity of thoroughly re-organising my scale of living, led me to determine to spend the idle months down on Lake Winnipeg along with my cousin. He was anxious to get a house built, and I was quite willing to help him, since I was thoroughly tired of idleness; also, by pooling our resources, we could put in the winter much more cheaply than each alone. Thither accordingly, I went, and, after we had obtained a supply of provisions and cold weather necessities, started work on his house.

PIONEERING—

While Manitoba is practically a prairie province, yet there are parts of it that are thickly covered with bush. From the Red River, eastward; the valley of the Assiniboine, and some distance south of that stream; also the northern districts were covered with dense forests. It was on the edge of this bush that I received my initiation into the mysteries of pioneering. The reason why my cousin had determined on such an unsuitable location, when all the prairie was at his disposal, he could never explain, and I put it down to the determining influence of circumstance. Certain it is that he could never have made a farm out of it, but this, at the time, he did not know. A great part of the land was poplar bush, which, at least simplified the question of building.

We had to begin at the beginning, for though he had put in the summer right there, there was nothing to show for it. Unfortunately, my cousin had very decided ideas as to the kind

of building that would suit him, and those ideas no consideration would induce him to modify. The "shack", he scorned: he had seen too many of them, and knew their inadequacy. He wanted a "house"—a dwelling. Logs, there were plenty, right on the spot, and we laid out the foundation of a house that would have taxed the skill of expert builders, while neither of us knew how to handle an axe. So, it came to pass that before we had the place anyway near ready for occupation, the cold weather was upon us. We hastily fitted a small part with a temporary roof of poles with a little hay spread over them, and just enough dirt over all to keep the hay from blowing away. Two cotton sacks served as substitutes for window panes; the chinks between the logs were stopped with wet mud, that froze as it was thrown; while roughly flattened logs partially floored the room and blocked the doorway. We finished up by building a fireplace after the fashion of the country as nearly as we could. The fireplace was decidedly picturesque, but sadly inefficient. It was of stone, chinked with mud, while the chimney consisted of a framework of four poles set on end on the fireplace and fastened into a long square by small sticks a foot long set into the poles like the rungs of a ladder and about nine inches apart. Over these rungs were hung strips of long grass well plastered with mud, which served as a groundwork for more mud both inside and out. But we were too inexperienced, and the result of our handiwork was a failure. We could cook our food, but if we made enough fire to warm ourselves, the chimney would catch, and the house was in danger. And, do what we could, it became no better. Before the winter was half spent, the wind had blown all the dirt and grass off the roof, leaving the bare poles as our only protection from the cold and the snow. We never took off our clothes all winter; with these we were well provided. When we went to bed, we donned our overcoats; when we had sat around the small fire circumstances allowed us, till we became cold from inaction, we ran about outside till circulation was restored. This collation of facts may be taken without a grain of salt; nothing is in the slightest exaggerated. Take this winter all in all, it was a pretty hard lesson for youths as green as we were; but it left no mark, except on our memories. We had plenty to eat, and youth and health were on our side.

We had other things to think of beside our hardships. An epidemic of smallpox broke out in an Icelandic settlement a few miles north of us, and we happened to be within the district shut off from the outside world. We made no attempt to guard ourselves from contagion, indeed we helped to nurse the sick.

and were in and out of the infected houses all through the visitation, but escaped without harm.

Our provisions began to run short, and a trip to the barrier—six or eight miles—was necessary in order to obtain a further supply. The two of us walked to the Post, arriving at dusk, and were shown into a "tepee", where we were told we must spend the night. I must explain that this style of tent is warmed by a fire built on the ground in the middle, the smoke from which is supposed to curl out through an opening in the top, and, as I found out long afterwards, when properly fixed, such a tent affords a very comfortable shelter. But neither of us knew how to fix it; neither did the officer in charge, and we could not get this particular tent to act properly, although we tried everything we could think of; nor could we get the smoke to go out, either at the top, or anywhere else. Shifting the flap at the top, which governs the draft, made no difference. We would stay inside till we could stay no longer, then, choked and blinded with smoke, we would rush out, gasping, into the open air. When we got cold right through, we would try the tent again. The quarantine officers had good tents, with stoves, but these officials were in a chronic semi-comatose state, from continuous overdosing in the "preventative treatment", and no efforts of ours availed to induce them to take pity on us. Next morning, my companion was so blind from the effects of the smoke, that I had to lead him home at the end of a stick, and it was some time before he recovered his normal sight. I often have thought, in the light of later experience, that it was sheer good luck that neither of us was badly frozen, and my memories of the gentlemen in charge are not at all charitable in consequence.

This was not our sole encounter with the quarantine station. Some time afterwards, my partner borrowed a team of dogs to go up for provisions. His visit was made the occasion of a hot time at the station. It lasted a night and a day. Someone sat down on a red hot stove, and the tent was knocked over. One man wanted to fly, but he found he could not. When my cousin finally got off on the road home, he was so full of medicine that he dropped off to sleep in the sleigh. He arrived in the middle of the night, singing gaily. I had to help him out of the sleigh, he was so stiff. His hands and feet were frozen, and I had the job of rubbing them with melting snow until they thawed out. The palms of his hands and the soles of his feet peeled off nearly to the bone, so that for some time I was afraid he would be permanently injured, but by spring he was able to

walk about, and also to use his hands to a certain extent. The experience left serious scars, both physical and mental. It taught him a lesson. Apart from the stirring incidents, the winter passed in calm but not unpleasant monotony. Stopping up holes in the roof; mudding up the chimney after its periodical burnings, getting wood, melting snow and cooking, prevented me from "thinking long" as the natives say.

The man Ogilvie, with whom I was marooned at the mouth of the river, had built him a little shack, about six by eight, in the bush a few miles from our habitation, and I would frequently walk up to see if he were still alive. He had a small tin stove, an improvised packing box table, and a bunk of poplar poles, and as long as he had enough to eat, he appeared perfectly happy. He was Scotch, and evidently well brought up; but he had got used to this kind of life, and saw nothing unpleasant or incongruous in it. I also did not omit to visit the Icelandic settlement. These were people who had been accustomed to hardships, and knew the best ways of alleviating them. They had settled on Lake Winnipeg on account of the fish, but, to offset this advantage, all their land required clearing, and it would take years of hard labor to bring a decent sized farm under cultivation. But the abundance of fish of every kind, certainly made things a little easier for them in the beginning. The lake was full of fish. A short net set out would more than provide for a large family, and in the fall of every year, the Settlement people would come down, and in a fortnight or so would kill thousands for their winter supply. When the quarantine was "lifted" in the spring, I bade "Goodbye" to Lake Winnipeg, and never saw it again till forty years had changed the place where we wintered into a gay summer resort, and I sought in vain for traces of our short residence.

My objective was Selkirk—then a small village, but with prospects. It was, and still is, on the west bank of the Red River, about thirty miles down from Winnipeg, and, now that activities had started on the coming railway, it was enjoying the excitement of being the point from which departure was made for the ever nearing contractor's camps. The surveyed line ran through endless bush punctuated by muskeg and rocks from the river eastward, and progress was slow. I had no money left, and had made up my mind to take the first job that should offer, even though it should be "section" work. And, such a job very nearly fell to my lot. I chanced to get in touch with a man who was starting out east—the camp was fifty miles off as yet—the next day at noon. This left me just twenty-four hours

to bring up my little luggage from the boarding place. I made the time, all right, but the party had already crossed the river and was out of sight when I arrived, and my life was deflected into other channels. In my search for other employment, I dropped into a store, and got into talk with the man who kept it. He mentioned that there was a school vacant a few miles down the river, and that if I could get a permit from the Minister of Education, it would be no hard matter for me to get the appointment. After an interview with one of the trustees, I made my way to Winnipeg and succeeded in satisfying the authorities as to my qualifications, which, though English, were satisfactory. The Inspector of Schools gave me a permit, and I was installed in St. Peter's as teacher. This was on the Reserve and the teacher's salary was supplemented by a Government grant, on account of the Indian children attending. Those who were not in the treaty, were almost as poor as the Swampies, and had great difficulty in raising their quota of the teacher's salary, so that the Government grant was all that one could be sure of. Here, I put in a year and a half, boarding with one of the people and living on a diet of fish, bannock and tea. The whole settlement lived on the same plane, and there was little choice. The river teemed with fish; sturgeon, catfish, sunfish, whitefish, and gold eyes, all the choicest of their species. The mode of catching cat fish was novel to me. Two long sticks are stuck down into the mud, one close to shore, the other far out in the water. Between these two poles a line is stretched, to which, every few feet, are hung short lines, weighted and baited. A small bell is fastened to the top of the pole furthest out. When the bell tinkles, the fisherman goes out in his skiff, and unhooks the catfish, and brings it to shore after baiting afresh the line. Should the fisherman not be hungry, he will visit the line only twice a day. The Red River catfish, except that it is a little too fat, is most delicious eating.

Teaching school, I regarded only as a makeshift, and good only so far as it might lead to something more stable, and with a brighter prospective—in short, till something should turn up. So, when I fell in with a couple of Halfbreeds, who were about to start for the North-West, I was quite ready for a change, which, at least promised uncommon experience, if not adventure. My cousin had by this time got married, and disgusted with roughing it on an unpromising homestead, had got a school further up the settlement, and was earning a decent living. He afterwards became connected with St. John's College, where he held a position till the end of his life. I never saw him again.

OFF TO THE NORTH-WEST

I came to terms with the leader of the party, and lost no time in getting ready to make the trip in their company. The party consisted of two elderly men, one young fellow about my own age, and a woman, the wife of the leader. This man had made the trip the year before, and was therefore conversant with the road. He was taking out some goods to trade with the Indians. During my *séjour* in Red River, mostly among Swampies, I had necessarily seen a good deal of the aborigines, but nearly all spoke English, and were anything but what my imagination had conjured up as characteristic savages. Generations of contact with Hudson's Bay officials had civilised them as far as they could be civilised. Even those I had seen down on the lake were quite mild and friendly. Out West, where I was going, I would see the savage in his native lair, and could judge whether the tales I had read and heard had any truth in them.

Starting took some time. With four carts drawn by ponies, loaded up ready for departure, we lay just outside the city of Winnipeg for six weeks, waiting till these two voyageurs should be sober enough to face a six hundred mile journey with only one five gallon keg of whiskey. Ever they would make arrangements for leaving, and ever the lure of the city would prove too strong for them. The woman was as bad as the men. I must except the young man; he was as anxious to get off as I was, and as thoroughly disgusted. Neither of us drank, so that was denied us as refuge.

Eventually, at a time when they were too overcome to realise what was doing, we hitched up, and "hit the trail". Intermittent application to the keg kept their minds from dwelling on what they were leaving behind till we were too far on the road to go back, and, when the keg was found to be dry, they settled down to travelling, and proved themselves to be good, companionable fellows, never downcast when trouble was encountered, but full of expedients for all imaginable difficulties.

The level land of Manitoba extends about sixty miles to the westward of The Portage. Just before we commenced to mount to the first plateau, our way lay through low, almost swampy land, a district which made an indelible mark on my mind by reason of the myriads of mosquitoes we encountered there. Their numbers were beyond belief. Round our little camp-fire of an evening, we could scoop them up in handfuls; no sleep was possible in the circumstances under which we

travelled; the horses nearly went crazy, and gave us a lot of trouble to find in the morning, though they were always hobbled by tying together the two front feet, and had what amelioration a dense smoke could give them. Near Birtle or Bird-tail Creek we passed the last settler's house. He must have been a man with a great deal of faith in the future, for his only means of communication with the outside world was through occasional travellers or a hundred mile journey. The road was merely a cart trail worn by the horses and cart-wheels that continuously made their way, summer after summer, between Winnipeg and Edmonton. All streams had to be forded, and tremendous ravines negotiated, down and up, till we came near Qu'Appelle, where the last hardwood tree and the short prairie grass told us we had reached the plateau that stretches to the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains.

It has always seemed to me a misnomer to apply the word prairies to the bare country of the North-West. The Indians call it "the bare land"—the barrens would be a more appropriate designation. The grass is very short, owing to the limited rain-fall, and there is not a little danger of dying of thirst if the traveller be unacquainted with regular watering places. It is desolate, bleak and inhospitable.

The next time we saw residents was at the Indian Reserve of Touchwood Hills. A number of Indians were gathered at the Hudson's Bay Company's store there, and treated me to my first sight of the wild aborigines of the West. They were wild enough, dressed in every imaginable style, and noticeable for incongruity and truculence. The chief wore an old pot-hat with two scarlet pom-poms stuck on either side, a long coat, shirt, and breech-clout. Most of his followers had little more than a blanket, gaudy as possible, breech-clout and leggings made out of a discarded blanket. All wore moccasins. They were as impudent as picturesque. Most were on horseback, and the amusement that afforded great fun was riding full tilt at a person, as though to ride him down, but checking the horse in time to avoid an accident. It was great fun for the crowd to witness the fright of the victim of this trick, as he scurried away.

Our road ran through the Reserve, and swept down through the Great Salt Plain. Flat, low and barren, with spots here and there white with mineral salts, this stretched for forty miles without water fit to drink. Its deposits are what is termed "alkali" land. It is not really alkali that has impreg-

nated the soil to its detriment, but here and there all over the plains, is sulphate of soda—when crystallised, Glauber's Salts. Where it is found, the soil is white and bare—nothing will grow. Many lakes are covered with the crystals two or three feet deep, and invariably the water found in the permanent lakes on the plains is unfit for use. We got safely across this unwholesome region, and passed the Government telegraph office at Humboldt into the rolling lands that extend to the South Saskatchewan. There are several crossings of this river. That which we made for was called "Gabriel's Crossing." For many miles along the South Branch, as it is called, the land is settled by Halfbreeds, refugees from Red River, fugitives before the encroaching white man, with his ordinances and his regulations, his restlessness, his sophistications and his temptations. These people had realised their inability to cope with coming conditions, and had launched out into the wilderness, asking only to be let alone, and live their own life in their own way. Into the lower end of this settlement we came at Gabriel's Crossing. Here was a ferry; a novel one to me. It was a good-sized scow, with two big oars, for it had to be rowed across, backward and forward, by those who used it. In order to reach the proper landing place and counterbalance the force of the current, the scow had to be towed up stream a good way before each passage. This was done by tying the ferry rope to a horse's tail, and driving him up the river, while a man on the scow poled the vessel off the bank. It was a long, tedious job, but was finally accomplished. The person who owned the scow probably made an appreciable addition to his income by the fees he earned in this way.

From the South Saskatchewan, westward, the land is level for fifty miles, cut up only by buffalo runs, made by countless numbers when moving from place to place, the deepest leading to the river. No better testimony to their immense numbers is needed than these runs, often a foot deep. One misadventure we had was more laughable than awkward. On this trail—as on most trails—the watering places are to either side of the road, and the traveller must turn in to them. It is generally advisable, when unhitching, to keep the front of the cart facing in the right direction. Once, along the road, we failed to do this, and, the next morning being cloudy, we journeyed quite a distance on our back trail, before we discovered our error. We were careful not to repeat it. Crossing the precipitous Eagle Creek, we wound our way to the south of the Eagle Hills, a longer route, but preferable to the river road by reason of the number of difficult creeks to be there encountered.

We had now been about six weeks on the trip, and the weather showed signs of breaking, so we were glad when we came upon a collection of shacks, which our leader said belonged to the Red Pheasant Indians, who, that fall had been installed on a Reserve. He had some acquaintanc with a few of them, from his former residence in the district, and we were glad of a few days' rest for ourselves and the horses. This sojourn was forced upon us, because there was a foot of snow on the ground when we woke up next morning. Also there was something else that interfered with our immediate departure; one of our horses had a great part of his thigh eaten off by a wolf during the night, and we had to bargain with the Indians for another one to replace it. This attack by a wolf is not uncommon, the Indians informed us, especially when the animal attacked is worn both in spirit and body with unremitting labor. A horse in good condition would never allow a beast of prey to approach to dangerous proximity.

We stayed three days on the Reserve, and I poked about among the houses and people, in search of the peculiar and the interesting. But there is nothing that immediately appeals to either the mind or the imagination in the average, ordinary Indian in his average, ordinary home, and I had no premonition that I should, for years, be intimately associated with these same unprepossessing people.

The snow melted, and on the fourth morning we started on the last lap of our six hundred mile journey. Our way led through a hilly country of park-like appearance; bluffs and prairie with luxuriant grass, studded here and there with gem-like lakes and ponds that swarmed with wild fowl, which formed a most welcome addition to our homely bill of fare, for our larder was getting low. The young fellow and I had walked every step of the way, and many steps to either side, each time we camped, hunting the horses who took all their pleasure in not being found. Our appetites were enormous and hard to satisfy, while the food was plain even to bareness, and unvaried at that. Two of us, therefore hailed the approaching end of our journey with delight. Once, during the latter part of our trip, I found a small sheet of "dry meat" on the road. It was almost like a piece of leather, and did not look appetizing in the least, but it served me to munch for many a mile. This comestible, if it be not expedient to crisp it on a fire—when it is much improved—must simply be gnawed like a piece of raw hide. But it proved comforting to me.

BATTLEFORD—

On the sixth of October, 1878 we wound our way down the hill into the flats of Battle River, crossed at the ford, near the Hudson's Bay store, and camped on the other side, which promised better feed for the horses.

Battleford was at that time, the Capital of the North-West Territories; Portage La Prairie was the last little aggregation of houses between Winnipeg and the Rockies; all west of the Portage was a wilderness. The projected line of the trans-continental railway had been surveyed, and the telegraph wires strung as far as Edmonton—at that period no more than a trading post of the "Company".

The summer before our arrival, gangs of men had been at work putting up buildings, making the wilderness echo to the hammer and the saw. A residence for the Lieutenant Governor had been completed; a Judge's house; a Land Titles office and a house for the Registrar; these and other buildings had been erected on the bank above the south side of the river a short distance west of its junction with the North Saskatchewan, while on the plain between the rivers, as a better strategic position, extensive barracks for the Mounted Police occupied a picturesque and prominent place. A number of log shacks, big enough to hold a bed, a packing-case or two, and a mud fireplace, had been thrown up, as it were, on the south flat, to accommodate the semi-permanent native population and the employees of the two stores—the Hudson's Bay Co., and a trader named Mahoney. A newspaper plant had but just arrived and the "columns" of the "Saskatchewan Herald" recorded, and, to a certain extent perpetuated the news of the West.

The country to which I had come differed greatly from Manitoba. There, the land is almost dead level, inclining to swamp. Sixty miles or so west of Winnipeg, the country rises, not into hills, but into plateaus, which, though diversified by ranges of hills, is more or less level, with a gradual elevation westward, and dry and treeless. Water is so scarce that missing a water-hole, from ignorance or carelessness, means considerable inconvenience, if not something worse. Fuel for cooking is generally carried from where it can be found, and one may travel hundreds of miles and not find wood enough to warm one's self with. Besides the Indians, there were the native Halfbreeds, people ousted from Red River by civilisation, hardy, and mostly inclining to the Indian mode of life. They

used as their languages Cree, French, and English, in the order named; often a gibberish between the first two. They were wild, daring, but rather unreliable; easy-going, hospitable, and good natured. They were, in fact, the outcome of their surroundings. All their wrestlings with Nature had taught them the uncertainty of mundane affairs, even of life and death, so they made the most of the present. They had learned from experience that they were liable on occasion to need help, and they were awake to the duty of giving it. They had their faults, but these were not of the grosser kind, nor such as could ever dim the remembrance of their kind hearts and simple ways. I was necessarily thrown much among these people; and became intimately acquainted with their dispositions and ways. The English-speaking variety were really Scotch, and differed from the French, in being more staid, and amenable to civilisation, as the English know it.

Glorious weather followed our arrival—beautifully clear and sun-shiny days, with cool nights, so, while we camped in the “flats”, and enjoyed the “*dolce far niente*” after our long walk, I followed the bent of an enquiring mind which prompted me to go in search of information. Everything was new to me and correspondingly interesting.

The rivers of the North-West are mostly little tricklets meandering down the country between banks, high out of all proportion to their volume—chasms that would accommodate some of the most mighty streams of the world. The Battle is no exception to this rule, for, though it ranks only as a brook, its banks are as high as those of the Saskatchewan. The southern sides, or slopes are more or less clothed with trees, or scrub of some kind, while the northern, exposed to the sun, are bare, almost of grass.

The Battle River—the name given it by the Indians—gets its name from having been, for unnumbered years, the fighting ground of the various tribes. It formed the border between the bush country and the plains; north of that line the Crees and Stonies were dominant, while the southern region, the tribes of the Blackfoot alliance claimed as their own.

In Battleford—at that time the Capital of the North-West Territories, the shacks built by the inhabitants for shelter, were of the most primitive character. Round logs not very large, fitted together in square form by notches at the corners and built up, perhaps seven or eight feet high; a square hole at the side filled by a cotton sack, or a piece of thin raw-hide, to

serve as a window; another, and bigger hole fitted with a frame covered with raw-hide roughly, to use as a door, and meant to keep out the weather, not intruders—this is a fair description of the average dwelling. This ingenious combination all resulted from the contact of versatile minds with a dearth of lumber and glass, and hardware. The ground was the floor, and it soon became hard packed, while a mud chimney brought the structure to the stage of a completed residence.

The furnishings were as elemental as the building. A packing case or two, if they could be obtained, would be called table, seats, or cupboard, and probably, a bunk would be made out of small round poplar poles.

The Hudson's Bay had a post, while two private traders kept store, so that all kinds of luxuries, such as sugar, tea, molasses and coal oil, could be obtained by those who had the means of buying. Trade, however, went a very short distance beyond these necessities.

A few Indians, of the Cree and Stoney tribes, with their leather tents, added a picturesque element, and fed my curiosity, as well as taking up a good deal of my time, by constraining me to persistent and detailed investigation. The Red River people had jokingly warned me of the danger of getting scalped, but the few specimens I now saw, did not seem to be in any way dangerous.

The principal—nay, only—article of diet, was pemmican, with small rations of potatoes. Flour was eight dollars a sack, upwards—too dear for thoughtless consumption, while meat, that is buffalo meat, would not be available till winter. Now, while pemmican is no doubt a very valuable article for staying the pangs of hunger, it takes long experimenting till one gets accustomed to it. It is satisfying and goes a long way as food, but that is all. A variation of the usual pemmican, in which dried Saskatoon berries are mixed, is a good deal more tasty, and acceptable as an article of diet.

For a few days, and while I was investigating the employment situation, I stayed with the editor of the "Herald", an Ontario gentleman of the old school, a practical newspaper man, courteous, kind and well informed. He appeared to have some acquaintance with everybody in the East. Name a person, and he would immediately proceed to give the person's history, that of all his family, and where his father farmed, with every family detail. And it was not merely talk; he knew. I had the pleas-

ure of his intimate acquaintance for many years after this, and ever found him replete with interesting information.

As for the employment that I was anxious to find, I met with disappointment. Work had been going on during the summer at the government buildings, but they were practically finished, and activity of every kind was most conspicuous by its absence. There were quite a number of people, but they seemed to get along without work. This, I had not experience enough to be able to do. The leader of the party with whom I had made the journey up to the West had been in the employ of the Church of England mission the previous summer, and through him I came in contact with the Reverend John Mackay, a pioneer of the Protestant Church in the country. He was establishing a mission on one of the Reserves that had, that summer been laid out for the Indians; winter was fast approaching, with no other prospect in sight, so I hired with him. He was, at the time finishing off a residence for himself, for he was not above working at whatever his hands found to do, and, I may say, set an example not only in that respect, but in every other, that it is a pity all of his cloth have not followed. He was active, zealous, and yet broadminded, never sparing of himself where duty called, and undaunted and undeterred by difficulties and hardships that the general run of missionary skilfully evades.

That year—1878—the band, called after their chief, Red Pheasant, partly under the influence of Mr. Mackay, and partly because buffalo were rapidly getting scarcer, determined to accept the offer contained in the treaty and settle on land surveyed out for them by the government. The authorities, in order to minimise the dangers that might be anticipated from the proximity to what we call civilisation, stipulated that the Reserve must be at least twenty miles from what was the Capital of the Territories, so the Indians had chosen the southern slope of the Eagle Hills as their permanent location. With two companions, therefore, I went out to the Reserve. The person in charge was a Mr. Clarke, who being a farmer's son, and having a practical knowledge of agriculture, had been sent out by the Church Missionary Society for the purpose of inducting the Indians into the mysteries of their new mode of life. The other man was named McLean, a Scotchman, and a carpenter. Shortly afterwards Edward Thomas, one of my fellow Argonauts, came out to help us finish off.

I had hired as school teacher, but we had first to erect a dwelling, and stable. Logs were cut and hauled out of the bush

after being flattened on two opposite sides. These were dovetailed into each other at the corners; poles were cut for the roof and after being peeled, were so placed as to form a basis for the grass thatch that used to take the place of shingles in those days. Holes for the door and windows were sawn and the respective utilities fitted therein. The floor and ceiling were of boards rip-sawed by ourselves. Finally, the chinks between the logs were filled with mud, and the whole whitewashed without and within.

These processes were duplicated in putting up a school-house. We had a long job, and winter was half through by the time the buildings were ready to use but I got a great deal of experience. The finished houses had quite a respectable appearance, and furnished a good example to the Indians. Our house, however, was cold. I slept upstairs, under the roof, and there was always frost on our blankets in the morning during the bitter weather.

The Indian dwellings, on the other hand, were quite warm. They were low and rough, in fact, neither anxiety nor effort had been expended on their appearance, while, with us, looks went a long way. They had big mud fire-places, which threw out tremendous heat, and fire was kept going in them night and day. Indians seem never to be all asleep. Their mode of living, and scanty apparel made it absolutely necessary to have some place to relax in—to soak in the heat, after the vast expenditure of energy that it costs to resist the extreme cold.

RED PHEASANT'S RESERVE—

The Indians' idea, in their choice of this place, was that the location was handy to the plains, for hunting; was good for mixed farming; and was as near as they would be allowed to get to the town. In reality, buffalo hunting was at an end when they took up the land; the soil and the conformation of the country almost precluded farming—except stock-farming—and the town never became of sufficient importance to influence their future in any way. It is a rough country; broken by lakes, by swamps, and by hills; pretty but impracticable.

The Reserve was six miles square—for about a hundred and fifty people, being apportioned to their number, but Indians are gregarious in the extreme, the shacks being all together in groups to preserve the distinction of families. The men wore the "breech-clout"—generally a strip of blanket—leggings of the same, with a fringe of narrow cuttings flopping from right and left; a cotton shirt, or no shirt at all, with the blanket

over all. The women were clothed in a print or "stroud" dress with a loose blouse-like garment above, leggings nicely beaded, tied just below the knees, and blanket. All wore moccasins of home tanned buffalo hide, with either a wisp of grass in the bottom, to keep the sole off the cold snow, or a piece of sacking or rag used as a sock.

The winter passed quietly and quickly when the school was ready, by which time I had made acquaintance all round. Then I gave the youngsters their first lessons in English, in reading, and writing, and in figures. I also taught them the syllabic characters to enable them to read and write in their own language. These, I had first to learn myself and it helped me greatly in assimilating Cree. Taking them all in all, they were in no degree less responsive to instruction than the ordinary run of white children. In my spare moments there was plenty of work fixing the inside of the dwelling house.

The Indians also put in a quiet time. Parties made trips out to the plains after meat and, though buffalo were reported scarce, they secured enough to eat. Rats were plentiful and rabbits, but none of them had shot guns, nor did they know how to hunt any other game than the buffalo. For diversion, they had the inevitable "tea dance" given in house after house, night after night; "no sleep till morn" literally, for the "tom-tom" murdered sleep. At first, when they were new to me, I attended one or two of these festive gatherings, but could divine no attraction in them, except for what I could there learn.

Tea is brewed in an immense kettle, as strong as circumstances warrant, and "painkiller", or in default of that luxury, chewing tobacco, stirred thoroughly through it. This concoction is handed round to the company in the cups with which each comes provided. This dance, the white men call "The Tea Dance"; the Crees—"Kees-kway-payth-tah-win". It has nothing particularly reprehensible about it for an orgy. The participants sit round the inside of the tent or house—male on one side, and female on the other. A drum, or something to serve instead, keep time; while all hands join in the singing. Anyone starts a tune, and the rest come in. One after another rises, and with measured step, moves sideways round. The time is three-fourths, and the bodies of the dancers, from the knees upwards, are jerked up and down quickly at the second beat, at the same time taking a step sideways. There are numerous tunes, all in a minor key. I found it almost impossible to master these, never getting more than one or two, they were so weird and unnatural, but, even to my prejudiced ear, they were not

destitute of harmony and some of them I thought quite nice. Many of these people had melodious voices and often there were words sung to the tune. At frequent intervals, they refresh themselves with copious draughts of the brew and as the stuff possesses authority from the admixture of tobacco or painkiller, this, with the heat and excitement, works them up to extreme vigor. They get a great deal of satisfaction out of it.

An incident occurred that winter, connected with a tea dance, which, though tragical, was interesting as revealing one phase of Indian character. A man, who for some reason did not wish his wife to attend the usual tea dance, forbade her to go. She disobeyed him, however, and went, leaving him to take charge of their two young children. The children got restless and cried. He went down to the dance and called her home, but she would not come. After a while he went again, calling her outside, and remonstrating with her, but she still refused to obey. He returned to his shack, took his rifle down from the pegs on which it hung, stretched himself on their bunk, and blew his brains out. It was wounded pride at being openly flouted by his wife.

The Indians placed the fault with the new laws. "Ah, hitherto", they said "a man in that position would have given his wife a whipping, supposing that the fear of chastening had not deterred her—and that would have been the end of the matter. Now that a man could be put in gaol for a necessary act of justice, women would do whatever they liked". Several of the men had two wives; one of them had three, but of only one of these polygamists did I hear that his wives quarrelled. One wife insisted on having a house separate from the others and got it. Each woman brought up her own children.

We lived, that winter, as much as we could on meat in one form or another. Flour was eight dollars a sack of one hundred pounds, tea a dollar, and sugar twenty-five cents a pound, each; there were no vegetables. From the proceeds of their hunting expeditions the Indians got a sufficient supply of food. Notwithstanding this, their begging gave us infinite annoyance and trouble. From their point of view, they were asking nothing more than they were prepared to give if they had been in our position or if they had possessed anything we wanted. What one Indian has, all have. Anyone who refuses to subject himself to this rule is accounted mean. "He wants to be the only one to survive" they say. We were new to these conditions and it took a long time to work us up to breaking this siege of begging and shutting down on them, but at length, at the risk

of falling in their esteem, we were obliged to confess that we were low enough in the scale of humanity to want to live a little better than they did. Once they got it into their heads that, good or bad, we were going to keep to our own way, we had no more trouble. We would give to the sick or in case of necessity, but there was nothing for the idle visitor. In order to inculcate the doctrine of thrift and ambition, as well as to justify our action, we had to be eternally preaching the beauty of the gospel of selfishness, till, for my part I felt pretty mean. By the spring we had the band well broken in so that they gave us no more bother. Two or three years afterwards, when the scarcity of food drove the wandering Indians northward, we had a recurrence of the difficulty. The door would be pushed open and several truculent looking fellows would file into the house and sit down with their rifles between their knees, waiting to be fed. After eating, they would leave at once, but they would sit for hours silently expecting food to be placed before them. They had a wild look and at first bluffed a good many meals out of our timidity, but we became aware eventually that they were purposely trading on the effect their menacing attitude produced on us, and the day came when we succeeded in impressing on them, as we had convinced the others, that we were resolved not to keep open house.

In the spring of 1879, our Indians received the "assistance" cited in the treaty, viz: four oxen, six cows, two plows, with spades, hoes and a few garden seeds, and a white man was sent to superintend, or help them in putting in their small crop. None of the men had ever done a hands turn in their lives before and the attempt they made was, even to a considerate eye, absolutely ludicrous. While one held the plow handles and a second sat on the beam, each ox had a driver by its side. The oxen were freight animals and plowing, or working at anything in pairs was new to them, as to the men; the piece of ground was plentifully covered with short brush and the roots kept pushing the share out of the ground, so that the work was strenuous enough to require relays of the willing helpers who sat in the shade and conned the performance. But the plowing was at length finished and the grain sown. At the fencing, the women, who were quite handy with the axe, ably supplemented the efforts and sustained the reputation of the band in their first essay at agriculture. The women also put in the garden seeds after rooting up the ground with grub-hoes; one by one they would drop the tiny seeds with as much care as though they were sowing grains of gold.

Their spring labors concluded, the overseer left them and the band started out on the prairie to hunt buffalo, while I stayed at home tending the little garden and fighting mosquitoes. There was more rain than usual that year and flies were proportionately numerous and vicious. Buffalo were still obtainable at a short distance out from the Reserve and the band came home with a fair supply of provisions. With government scythes they tried hay-making, but proved too new to the job. Their little crop came to nothing, and the winter played havoc with their cattle. It was starvation, but they blamed something else. Their cattle were wild, Montana-bred and so hard to handle, that there was some excuse for the loss.

That summer, three small chiefs of the Stonies took up land and, for the sake of company, had Reserves laid out adjoining Red Pheasant's. Moosomin and Thunderchild also went on Reserves between the Battle and Saskatchewan Rivers, while "Strike-him-on-the-back" settled on the south side of the Battle, about twenty miles above town. These Indians all returned from the plains to get their treaty.

In those days, the annual treaty payments were made at only a few centres of Indian distribution. Of these, Battleford was one, Sounding Lake another; so, in June of each year the scattered companies of Indians converged toward one or the other of these points. Not only because they would receive the annual subsidy of five dollars a head was this a festival. People who had not seen each other for twelve months would meet and renew acquaintance. They would feast and dance and amuse themselves in their primitive way, till all their provisions were consumed and they had to disperse to replenish their larders. Strong drink, in those days, they saw only occasionally and it had not become a circumstance in their lives; but they could dress up in their finery and ride round the country, lording it over the few whites that lived in the district. The Indian was still of account in his own country.

Treaty payments were, at first, really run by the Indians. If a man said he had ten in his family, there was no one to contradict him. Afterwards, as the officials in charge gained confidence, the several members of a family had to be produced, but the Indians countered this move by lending each other their fathers and mothers, and other relations generally. In this way many were paid over and over again.

After being paid at Battleford, they would travel to Sounding Lake, and, under another name, for most of them have more than one cognomen, receive another payment. Placing in-

structors on Reserves, and paying each band separately, at home, gradually did away with this graft and deprived many smart Indians of a good part of their revenue.

As the money was paid out traders were on hand to secure its proper transfer to themselves. For this, very little guile was required as the Indians were always ready to exchange that which they could not use for something useful and, also, it is to be remembered that for years this treaty money was all the money the Indians ever handled. Five dollars a year had to buy clothes, tea and tobacco for a year, not to speak of the hundred other things which, though needed, had to be done without. In their old way of living they had managed to supply themselves, but their old way of living was gone.

It is safe to say that when the treaty was first made neither white man nor Indian ever dreamed that the buffalo would disappear overnight, as it were. All was done on the assumption that hunting and farming would go hand in hand till the new life was as familiar as the old; when, therefore the whole native population was suddenly thrown on the government's hands, no provision had been made for such an emergency and the assistance doled out was painfully inadequate. For food, the Indian had to depend on government rations, supplemented by what they could kill in the way of ducks, chickens or gophers. And only a few could use a shotgun. Bearing all these facts in mind, it is not difficult to see by how narrow a margin the Indian in those days escaped starvation. If they fell sick they did not escape. To consumption, the disease of privation, they were particularly susceptible. The radical change in surroundings, in circumstances, and in food; the transition from plenty to dearth, and from leisure to labor, wrought deadly havoc with their seldom robust frames. The winters were especially hard on them.

In these first years, while the Indians were an unknown quantity, their peculiar ways, and traditional characteristics gave occasion to continual perturbed speculation as to what they might do to the unguarded country and the few helpless white settlers. Their opportunities were endless, yet crime was rare, partly due to their friendly intentions, and partly to their ignorance of personal liability. They thought the murder of a single white man would break the truce between the two races and that vengeance, rather than punishment, would be the result. Again they were naturally honest, and, in addition had an unspeakable dread of gaol and having their heads shorn. Any

misdemeanors which called for the intervention of the police arose from quarrels with the officials of the Indian Department. The Mounted Police were undoubtedly a fine body of men, well trained and officered; versed in all the ways and expedients of the country, as well as eminently tactful, but some little part of the praise that is lavished on them for the quiet that reigned is due to the natives of the country. The Indians were more law-abiding than the same number of white men under the same circumstances would have been; had it been otherwise, ten times the number of police would not have kept them in order.

This wholesale homesteading of the Indians called for more than expedients from the Department, wherefore "instructors" were appointed—imported experts from the East—so that the best advice might assist the natives in their new venture. These were all lumbermen from the Ottawa district and, while they knew nothing of the West nor of climatic conditions here, neither did anyone else, but they at least knew all there was to know about driving men, in addition to being experienced wire pullers.

An instructor and an assistant were accordingly allotted to Red Pheasant and the Stonies, putting up their dwelling half way between the two villages. The task set the agent and his subordinates was to make as good a showing as possible for the "assistance" dispensed. The sudden necessity of providing for a multitude of their wards had been but remotely anticipated by the Department and the cost had to be kept as low as possible, while, at the same time there must be some progress to report in justification of the expenditure. This problem naturally gave all concerned much anxious thought. To feed the Indians outright would involve too much expense, so many expedients were tried. The object was to get work of any kind out of the Indians and give them as little as possible. At one time they were paid at a certain rate for the work they did; again they would be rationed while working; or they would be paid in food at a certain rate per day; but in no event would the accomplishment compare with the outlay. The fact was that the Indian was new to manual labor, and could work only short hours and then only in an aimless, inefficient way. Reducing his ration did not spur him as effectually as it might a white man. I have seen Red Pheasant who never did a stroke in his life till he was fifty trying to earn sustenance for his family by cutting cordwood at a dollar a cord. Small game was fairly plentiful, but the men were strangers to the shotgun, and bows and arrows made little impression on ducks and geese. So the Indians were in danger of starving to death.

The Department early recognised the need of some official action in meeting cases of sickness and appointed a doctor. This, they considered adequate provision, and "let it go at that". But the doctor was helpless. Sick people require something more than pills. Proper alimentation, hygienic surroundings, decent care—all these were wanting, and all the representations that the medical man could safely make failed to stir the authorities to action. The Indians, of course, knew nothing of all this; indeed, when one fell sick, they had to be coerced into allowing a white doctor to attend them. They accepted sickness as they took visitations that they could see no cause for and had much more faith in their own medicines and doctors than they had in those who held a white man's diploma. Especially did they stick to the idea that serious sicknesses were caused by witchcraft and could only be dealt with by counter spells. They could recite many confirmatory instances of this and all argument fell dead on their minds. But consumption got their medicine men guessing. They could do nothing with it. They could pretend to find the deadly messenger and suck it out of the sufferer's chest, but this operation did not lead to the patient's recovery. It was a white man's disease. That accounted for their failure. Nor, indeed could the white doctor do much with it either, under the circumstances, so that the white plague took a terrible toll, and it was a good many years before the Department dropped its perfunctory attitude towards the sicknesses of the Indians, and took adequate measures for dealing with them. Today, if an Indian gets seriously ill he or she is sent to the hospital and is looked after exactly as a white person would be and the Indians have learned to appreciate this attention and acknowledge the white man's superiority in medicine.

Most of the bodily ills that now assailed them were new—the result of the radical change in their circumstances, especially of food. Unleavened bannock with a modicum of grease sat strangely on stomachs accustomed to nothing but animal food. The fetid air of their miserable little huts quickly affected lungs habituated to the fresh breezes of the plains. The arduous nature of their new life probably had a share also in finishing them off. All the good workers succumbed to consumption while the lazy and indifferent flourished.

The relations between the Department and the Indian were, in the beginning, quite cordial, but when both sides became subjected to the strain of daily personal contact a gulf gradually opened. This was the result of their different points of

view. The official counts his wards as lazy and thriftless; the Indian sees nothing but a domineering master in the official. There is something in both views but neither will take a single step toward bridging the chasm. It may be that now, when the rising generation speaks more or less English, they will understand each other better.

THE SUN DANCE

Of the customs of these Indians that which struck me as excelling in interest was what the white man has called "The Sun Dance". Until the year of the Rebellion, this was an annual affair, though objected to by the authorities, since it brought the Indians together, and increased the chances of massed insubordination. After the rising was quelled the dance was forbidden, ostensibly as cruel, although in answer to this reason the Indians "cut out" everything but the apparently innocent fasting and dancing. At the present day, when undertaken at all, the ceremony takes place where the unsympathetic eye of authority will not be offended.

An incident connected with the Sun Dance and its relation to the Department, occurs to me. Some years after the Rebellion, I was temporarily in charge of the Reserves of Moosomin and Thunderchild. The latter chief, who had escaped the stigma of being a "rebel", and was therefore *persona grata* with the Department, was chosen by the Indians to negotiate permission to hold a Sun Dance. The agent, just at this juncture, was very anxious that the two bands should buy a stallion which some political friends of his wanted to dispose of, so he landed at the Reserve one day and called the two chiefs to council. The agent told them that they were losing both time and opportunity in working with their small ponies. They should be bred up and in a few years their horses would be fit to do the same work that white men's horses did. A great chance had come his way and he hastened to lay the proposition before them. The stallion could be bought cheap and payment spread over a term of years to suit them. Thunderchild saw his time had come. He replied that he thoroughly agreed with all the agent had said, indeed he would go further and say that it was a pity the Department had not seen fit in the past to put a good stallion on the Reserves. But, there was something infinitely more pressing. From time immemorial the Indians had made the Sun Dance the principal ceremony in their worship of God. The God of the Indian and the God of the white man were one and the same, but each race had been taught a different way

of worshipping Him. Could it be right to prevent that worship? Would not the white man incur a serious responsibility in hampering it? The agent did not allow him to finish his harangue, but said that the Indian Department forbade the dances. The chief asked "why?" and he was told that the ceremony included performances that were inhumane and indecent and that the priests who were trying to turn the Indians into Christians viewed all these pagan rites with intense disapproval. "But" he went on to say, "what he came about was the buying of a stallion" and he carefully recapitulated the advantages the purchase would entail. Thunderchild, after listening very patiently, replied that he was anxious to help the agent and he was sure that if the Indians got leave to hold their dance they would be so pleased that they would consent to buy the stallion at once. Also, that at every Sun Dance he had seen priests looking on and he had never heard of their saying a word against it. If there were anything bad in the dance, the priests would not regard it with lenity, and the agent could hardly forbid a performance that even missionaries countenanced.

The agent, driven into a corner, thought he saw a loophole here for peace with honor. He said that he was sure no priest or clergyman could approve of the dances; so sure, that if the chief got written approval from both Roman Catholic and Protestant clergymen—and bought the horse—no steps would be taken to prevent the dance. The agent thought this would end the discussion so far as the dance was concerned, but the diplomatic chief turned up next day at the Indian office with letters from both clergymen, denying that they saw anything reprehensible in the Sun Dance and repudiating the idea that it should be stopped on their account. The missionaries did not want "to get in wrong" with their charges. So the Indians had their dance—and bought the stallion.

The first summer I passed on the Reserve the Indians after their trip out on the plains for buffalo meat, set out for town where all were to gather for treaty payments, and a young Indian who had attached himself to me, and whose influence was instrumental in keeping me safe when the Rebellion started, invited me to join the crowd, as there would be an opportunity of witnessing a Sun Dance. I accepted the offer; he gave me the visitor's part of his tent, which was occupied by only himself and wife, and treated me to the best he had, without expecting anything in return. I saw many Sun Dances after that, but none that interested me so greatly. A great

crowd had already assembled, and set their leather tents in a circle, each band together. They were a wild lot, making night hideous—and alarming, with their weird songs and dances. The Stonies especially seemed to be hunting for trouble. They would go round to the door of every head man and give him an ovation, with vocal and instrumental music and speeches, all very disturbing to the mind of one, who like myself was a stranger to it. But the danger was more seeming than real.

The dance to which the white man has given the name "Sun Dance", was peculiar to the prairie Indians, until it was adopted, with variations, by the inhabitants of the wooded country to the north. It is known among the Crees by a name that means "denying one's self water", in the same way as fasting means denying one's self food. Also though the Pantheon of the Indian is indiscriminately inclusive, the sun seems to have been neglected; so, how the Sun Dance acquired its name is a mystery. The booth of the Sun Dance is the temple of the Thunder; the dance itself, a locally annual ceremony of supplication and thanksgiving.

Certain persons, only, undertake to "make" a dance; those whose spiritual acquirements warrant them in assuming the great responsibility it entails. They must be males. Until quite proficient, the "maker" associates himself with one more expert than himself, and the two are named as makers but a single individual may do it. Each maker has some side lines more or less in ceremonial from the others.

The dance is projected during the fall or winter months previous and is the result of a promise made in sickness or trouble; or, maybe, in endeavor to secure some favor from the Powers Unknown. The same idea actuates the dancers. They vow to dance for whichever time they choose, one night, or two nights—fasting, or modified fasting, dependent, of course, on someone making a dance, or at the next dance. Before spring opens out, it is heard that this or that man is going to "make" a dance, at such and such a place; or the maker may send a message round, inviting people. Everyone, in some way or other, learns of it. If the maker wishes to do the thing in style, he wraps small pieces of tobacco up in parchment—Wah-pay-kin-e-kun—this is called, and despatches young men round to distribute them. These will travel from one camp to another, going to the head men. They will present their little package, and say, "Smoke this"—"So-and-so says thus to thee, 'I intend to make a Thirst Dance, Come! Help me! and all your people'".

If the receiver of the message assents, he and the crowd of men assembled solemnly and in silence smoke the pipe in which the tobacco has been put. This means that the answer is in the affirmative. Should the consensus of opinion be adverse to the proposition, the package of tobacco is returned to the messenger untouched. But such an eventuality is unheard of in the case of an invitation to a dance. The time is given in the moon's phases. All this is done in a most dignified official style. The ceremonial completed, the assemblage allows itself to discuss matters in a gossipy way with the messenger until he leaves.

Apart from its religious significance the Thirst Dance means the yearly gathering of people whom the exigencies of life compel to spend the fall and winter in isolation and it is looked forward to as such. The young make, and the old renew acquaintances, and it is a general holiday.

In the early part of June—in the north, when the leaves are full-sized—the maker pitches his tent at the appointed place and, as the people arrive, they pitch their lodges by tribes and families in a circle calculated to hold all expected to attend. When the circle is complete an old man, chosen for his loud voice and strong lungs, marches slowly round by the openings of the lodges, crying out that the operations are about to be commenced and the people are to get ready at once. This means that every young man that owns or can borrow a horse, arrays himself and his steed in all the finery he can muster. If he can persuade a girl to sit with him all the more glory! And, oh,—if he had a prancing horse.

But, first, the convenor, as Master of the Ceremonies, followed by all the men, young and old, marches to a tune round the circle. The music may be composed by the maker, or his familiar or perhaps one of the tunes sacred to such occasions. Then they set off to the bush, old and young, the first with axes, the others mounted, and provided with long lariats. The horsemen and girls gallop off, making their ponies cut up and rear to show off; the dogs bark; girls squeal in coquettish fear; guns are fired; and everybody has a great time. The older men chop down the necessary trees; the young attach lines and haul them. The pole for the middle is perhaps twenty feet long and six or eight inches through, with a few stumps of branches left at the top. A lot of shooting is done, at and over this stick. It is felled and drawn to camp by a crowd of young irrepressible horsemen. Not a little trouble is often experienced in hauling

the tree to its place in the middle of the proposed pavilion, but difficulties only make occasion for more shooting, and shouting and fun.

The hole for the butt end of the tree is dug two or three feet deep and the first timber is drawn into a perpendicular position by a crowd of willing but unsystematic helpers. The Master of Ceremonies may be hauled up with it, seated in a nest made for him at the top. His progress upward is marked by directions to his associates and, often, fears for his own safety, before he finally sits erect on a securely fixed platform. Uprights, about eight feet long with crotched tops, are set in the ground, say ten feet apart in a circle with a radius of about twenty feet, with the tree as a centre. Rails are placed round in the crotches of these uprights, and rafters join this wall to the nest in the tree. Leather tents—unsolicited contributions—are spread so as to cover that part of the enclosure where the performers will sit. The door is on the south; it is the entrance—merely an open space. A few feet north of the tree a hole eighteen inches square is dug and an old buffalo skull placed beside it. A wall of leafy branches goes round, where the dancers stay, and is continued, breast high, in front of them, and at the ends of their line, so that they are fenced in, back, sides and front, in a semi-circular lane, six feet, or so, wide. With the green of the boughs enlivened by variegated prints—the gifts of votaries—the grotesque get-up of the dancers, and the generally barbaric surroundings—the scene is one to be remembered. The impression produced, too, is accentuated by the wild and fantastic appearance of the Indians and their savage reputation. On the pole in the middle are hung articles dedicated to the "Great Bird", Thunder—guns, rifles, pieces of cloth—anything the giver wishes. These things will be taken down and hung in some out-of-the-way place in the bush, to be safe from the mocker or marauder.

The actual dance begins in the evening. A small fire is lit on the far side of the pole; apparently for the benefit of smokers. To the right of this—where one enters—sits the choir, round the men who pound the "tom-tom" with small drumsticks. This choir is composed of the best singers, gangs of whom relieve each other at intervals. This is a purely voluntary service: they come and go as they please. Men occupy the right side and women the left, any others who will, join in the singing. Some of the men, and many of the women have good voices and are experts in their own style of harmony.

Each dancer has a small pipe, made from the leg-bone of a goose, on which he sounds a shrill "toot-toot", in time with the drum. They dance or rest, as the spirit moves them. All are arrayed as fancy and means dictate; paint of all colors disguises their countenances, and the general effect is unquestionably diabolical. Dancing is not continuous, each night all stop for a few hours' sleep and there are frequent intervals during the day. Males and females have each their own side of the lane and are separated by a barrier of boughs. A slight bending of the knees to allow the body to move up and down in time with the drum constitutes the "Dance". A song will be raised, and the drum started; the dancers—few, many, or all—bob up from behind their leafy screen, whistle in mouth; "toot-toot-toot" *ad lib*—the singing stops; the dance ends; down they drop behind their screens.

There are many diversions. Once, a votary had the top joint and a half of his little finger chopped off in fulfilment of a vow. A block of wood was brought in and placed beside the fire. The victim made a little speech, telling how he had promised to do this when his child was sick. The child had died, but he was going to keep his word. Some would not have done so but he was one who did what he said. He sat down "beside the block" and began to sing. He laid his finger on the block, and an old fellow, with a business-like air, held the hand, while with one sweep of a long, heavy, cleaver-like knife, he chopped off a piece of the finger. The song stopped when amputation was completed. The finger was terribly mangled, the bone being so shattered that the wound took a long time to heal. All interest in the event vanished as soon as the deed was done.

The vow may be of some other mutilation. A couple of inches of loose skin, on each side, just above the breast, are caught between the finger and thumb, and held tight, while the sharp blade of a jack-knife is pushed through, making a slit of a size to take a small wooden skewer about four inches long in each breast. These allow room for a line to be fastened on, the free end of which is attached to the top of the middle pole from the outside. The victim then dances or staggers round and round the outside of the booth, straining on the line. He must break loose; and he does it by throwing his weight on the line till the skin gives way. This does not always happen quickly, and it may be that the added weight of a friend is needed to end the torture.

Similarly, skewers are run through the skin of the shoulder-blades, by which to drag one or two old buffalo heads. A line

is tied to the heads, which drag on the ground behind, and much careful choosing of the way is necessary to bring the burden safely into the middle of the tent, with a minimum of jerking. On arrival at the pole, the line may be untied and the skewers withdrawn. If the ordeal be prolonged, these skewers swell with moisture, and are often to be got out only by catching hold with the teeth, and giving a sharp jerk.

Again, articles may be suspended from the skewers. In one instance, two men went off behind a little knoll, some distance away, carrying ten guns. The total weight must have been sixty or seventy pounds, and these were borne into the booth, a gun hanging by a thong on each of ten different skewers through the back, while the bearer, the whole way, sang as heartily as the pain would allow. In the tent, the "maker" unhitched the strings from the skewers, which latter, he extricated with his teeth. The guns he piled by the centre-pole where the owners came up singly and claimed them.

Again a horse may be tied to a skewer and led into the tent. Perhaps the animal is led round the ring. This is a trying ordeal as everything tends to make the beast shy and he often breaks loose. The penitent will be fastened to the bridled horse in the open, anywhere, and he will make the round of the large circle of tents, singing. This completed, he will enter the tent and go up to the pole, against which he will lean with bowed head and folded arms.

Ludicrous incidents are frequent. Once a brave undertook to lead a dog into the tent by a line fastened to a skewer through the skin between his shoulders. The dog was a great big brute—for an Indian dog, a monster. The man got the round of the circle completed, led the dog up to the centre-pole, and bowed his head there in lamentation. The wails became louder and louder. During this the dog was uneasy, being evidently suspicious of his surroundings. Whenever the man's devotion vented itself in sudden and loud bursts of penitential outpouring, the dog would tug at the line which confined him and, as the animal was about as heavy as the human being, the latter found it hard to preserve that equilibrium of mind and body which the solemnity of the occasion demanded. But, the trouble was bearable, until, in the course of his penance, it became necessary for the Indian to fire his gun off into the air. At the explosion the dog gave a fearful jump and, howling, jerked the man over backwards, dragging him out of the booth and through the crowd, till he finally burst himself loose and left

the astounded worshipper to recover himself amid the roars of the hastily assembled Indians.

The large audiences, too, afford the opportunity for the braves to recount their deeds of daring. It will be something like this. A number of select warriors—practically naked—their bodies smeared all over with white mud, picked out with red signs of their daring, file into the arena, singing and dancing. They dance "to somebody for somebody", as their saying is, and their aim is to enhearten the dancers. Presently, they stop dancing and one or other tells the story of some successful raid. The oration will run as follows:—"We were camped at such and such a place. From there a war party went out. I was one of them. So many nights we walked, hiding in the daytime. Suddenly we felt the enemy. We sent out scouts. They found a large camp. Three days we stayed there; we saw them every day, but they never felt us. We brought away twenty horses. I cut loose one that was tied to the door of a lodge. Three days we fled. They never overtook us." A tap or two is given on the drum at each sentence, with a loud and long burst at the end, to show the appreciation of the audience. Or the speech may run thus:—"We started out from the Elbow on a hunting tour. We came across people on the edge of the Eagle Hills. A large camp. We struck out on the prairie. On the tenth night, the Blackfeet attacked us. We beat them off. For three days we fought as we travelled. I was riding a buffalo runner—a bay with white feet. I exchanged shots with a Blackfoot. I rode at him. He ran away. I caught him, and pulled him off his horse. I stabbed him with a knife." Deafening applause, and salvos of drum-beats.

The story is perhaps enacted in dumb show, if Indians of another tribe—as Stonies—are in camp. It is astonishing how perfectly the untutored actor can convey the required impression to the spectators, though at least some slight knowledge of the sign language of the Plain Indians is necessary for a complete understanding of the performance.

It has often been remarked by old Indians, that the tales told by braves during a Thirst Dance are, to say the least, outrageous exaggerations. Each event narrated has been witnessed by one or other of the audience, so that the exact truth is well known. Therefore, it may be taken for granted that these stories have merely the foundation true; interwoven with this are all the embellishments that the imagination and oratorical powers of the narrator allow.

On the second day, most of the offerings are made. Wearing apparel, ornaments, household utensils, guns, horses, equipment—any of the things that enter into Indian life, either as necessities or superfluities, are offered in sacrifice. The small things are piled up in the open space in the tent, lifted up, one by one, by the "maker", and held out for some one to come and take them. Horses are led into the booth. A few words accompany each gift—a reminder of the giver's virtue. The takers are mostly old people—the cheekiest. The underlying idea of the offering is, that it may buy something the giver desires—health, long life, success of some kind—which will be contributed by the recipient. So, the oldest and poorest, who have very little to lose, elect to take chances. They will give reasons why they are the proper persons, with a better right than any other to receive the gift, but the unprejudiced listener will inevitably conclude that impudence is their principal attribute.

A crowd of spectators sits three or four deep round the edge of the booth, that is not allotted to the dancers; men on the left, and women on the right; males in breech-clout, leggings and blanket, females in the most gaudy prints they can muster. Either may, in addition, have a blanket thrown over the shoulder. The number of horses a man has stolen, will be told by the horse-hoofs marked on the blanket; hands indicate the times he has grappled with the enemy; while the feather in his hair will be tipped with a little red branch for every foe killed.

By this time, if the weather is hot, the zeal of the dancers has visibly waned. When a tune ends, they all drop out of sight as promptly as possible, to while away the hours in smoking or gossip or in the pleasures of the toilet. Little mirrors are part of their equipment and so is paint. They may leave the booth for any good reason.

The most stirring tunes will now be started, and the drum pounded with all the vigor that a full stomach, to encourage an empty one, can put into a stroke. The helpers will come and dance frequently. In repeated harangues, the votaries are reminded by the Master of Ceremonies that their release is at hand: at sundown they will be free; and that the Thunder will be invoked to send a shower to refresh them. This is because they may drink any rain water they can catch. The Master of Ceremonies will then sing his own particular song (home made), which is always distinguished to a greater degree by vigor than by harmony. A curious coincidence is, that there is invariably rain during a Thirst Dance, sometimes a shower, perhaps merely

a sprinkle, but always enough to convince the Indians that their supplications are noted. Notwithstanding this refreshment, some of the dancers collapse, and have to be taken home for revival.

The joker now has his part to play in the ceremony. As though about to recount some brave deed an old warrior will leave the circle of spectators, and advance into the arena. His harangue will run thus:—"On a summer hunt, once, camp was made in Round Valley"—here the drum will beat rat-tat-tat—"A party went off after horses"—drum beat—"I was one"—drum beat—"A long way off we came up to the Blackfeet"—rat-tat-tat—"They felt us"—rat-tat—"But we gathered some horses together and fled before them"—rat-tat-tat—"Three days we fled"—rat-tat—"The land was dry"—rat-tat-tat—"All the springs and lakes to which we came, were dried up"—rat-tat-tat—"We were very thirsty"—drum beat—"As thirsty as you are now"—burst of drum beats—"Our throats were parched"—drum beat. "We thought to perish"—rat-tat—"Any kind of water we wanted"—rat-tat—"Only a little"—rat-tat-tat—"The third evening we came to a spring near Tramping Lake—roll of drum beats—"And we all had a good drink, just as you will this evening. Persevere". Fusillade of drumbeats, and loud applause.

The dance ends at sundown, when the exhausted devotees repair to their tents for much needed refreshments, with that peace of mind which only a sense of duty fulfilled, and obligation paid, can bestow.

In the later days, after the dance was over, the Indians quickly dispersed. One by one, as necessity pressed, they would fold their tents and steal away, each to the place where, in his experience, the needs of life have proved the easiest to satisfy. Formerly this haste was not necessary.

*INDIAN LIFE IN THE FIRST YEARS OF THE
RESERVATIONS 1878-1883*

*Transition—Indian Character—Games—The Sweat-Tent—
Clothes—Tents—Dogs—Children—Voracity—Laziness—
The Summer's Hunt—Domestic Relations—Fire—
Language—The Dance—Magic Rites—
Religious Beliefs—Pounds—The
Indian as a Warrior—The First
Battle of Cut Knife*

TRANSITION—

For six years I remained with these Indians in Red Pheasant's Reserve, teaching their children in school in the winter months—for they generally scattered in summer—and getting a little variety by teaching in Battleford while the Indians were absent. This was the first school opened in Battleford. During the first three of these years, buffalo meat might be obtained by seeking it far enough down south, but about '81 or '82, the Sioux claimed sanctuary on the Canadian side of the boundary, and, though the Indians claimed that never were the animals more plentiful than at that time, they suddenly and instantaneously disappeared. According to the Indians' notion, the poor brutes, stressed by continual hunting, had submerged themselves beneath the waters of lakes and boggy places for shelter and respite from the merciless baiting to which they were being subjected. Tracks to the edges of these places were pointed to in confirmation of this theory. This sudden cutting off of their natural supply of food, brought on a crisis in the Indian question.

While game was plentiful, all but the mildest tempered had despised the miserable provision made by the Indian Department for the training of natives in the practice of agriculture and for their subsistence while learning. Nor were they at all anxious to settle down. Although war between the hostile tribes had been stopped yet it was by decree only. Private fighting and stealing went on much as before and, as long as their quarrels and depredations were not injuring or interfering with white men, the authorities were tactful enough not to mix up in them. The Mounted Police were but a handful. So, though Cree and Blackfoot no longer fought on sight, they stole each other's horses whenever chance offered and redressed wrongs in their own old way. More than that, as circumstances became more stringent, they made incursions south of the Line and

killed cattle there, as well as in Canada. Soon, conditions became still harder, while restraints grew tighter and tighter, till, one by one, the bands drifted to their home in the north country, obliged to turn their hands to peaceful occupations.

While it lasted, this disturbed state of things affected us—dwellers of the north. Our apprehensions were never allowed to subside for want of reason. The Indians continually went to-and-fro and each fresh visitor brought new stories of lawlessness to keep alive our trepidation. When the treaty was made the Indians were told that the country would soon be full of white men, and, though several years had elapsed, the threatened influx had not materialised. Doubt was beginning to invade the natives' minds as to whether the stories of the white man's numbers might not be all bluff. So, while the peace of the land was in the hands of the Indians, armed, painted and frightful to the eye, with strange, uncouth customs and language, it is a matter of small reproach that every story was greedily swallowed and that apprehension was constantly and fearfully present. In isolated country houses few people would care to sit at night between a light and the window. Yet nothing happened. In all those years I can recall no instance of any wrong done to the whites; all misunderstandings were between the Indians and their guardians—the officials of the Indian Department.

CHARACTER—

During those six years that I resided among the Indians I learned and unlearned a great deal. Nearly all that I thought I knew, I found incorrect. I had to begin again. I learned their language; I learned their character and customs; I learned their point of view. I saw how they were born, how they lived, and how they died. In their natural condition, I found them honest, truthful and good-natured under all kinds of adverse circumstances. Even to-day in their degeneration, they will bear comparison in these respects, with their neighbors of various European nationalities. But, the more they mix with white men, the worse they become.

Their constitution inclines them to honesty. They are not ambitious enough to be greedy of other people's property, even if there were not the additional restraint of confinement and being shorn of their hair. Indeed, this characteristic is carried to a fault: no reward is great enough to induce them to labor arduously and continuously or after their immediate needs are satisfied. For this, they rest under the imputation of being

lazy; but, it is not so much laziness, as want of foresight and lack of emulation amongst themselves as to their manner of living. They are not individualistic enough. If one person is blest with more than his neighbour, then, Indian ethics require that he be not niggardly in assisting that neighbor, since, some day, things may be the other way about. There is little inducement, therefore, to look any distance ahead. In his own way, the Indian is energetic, patient and tireless. He will work like a demon, always in a good humor that neither difficulties nor discomforts can disturb. But, when he wants to go—to quit—when he gets homesick, or thinks he has sufficient money ahead—no consideration will stop him from going.

They are good tempered under the most trying conditions, philosophically inclined and thoroughly impressed with the idea that what must be, must be. In all the years that I have known Indians, I have never seen—or heard of—two men, or more, guilty of unseemly brawling, with threats and animadversions and loud talk. They can disagree and dislike one another, without working the feeling out in vituperation. Not that they do not express slighting opinions of each other, but that they do it in a matter-of-fact way that seems to need more than words to refute.

An illustration of this:—two men, who had long been at variance, at length reached a day when the forbearance of one came to the breaking point. Not hastily, but soberly, he bade his wife go and tell the other man that he was coming out after him with a rifle. The woman, after futile remonstrance, did as she was told. Number two was sitting in his tent when the word was brought him. He received the news without comment, only when the woman finished speaking, telling her to wait. He proceeded to push the lower skins up on the poles of the tent, all round the eaves, about two feet. This gave him a clear view all round. Then he took his rifle, loaded it and sat down in the centre of the tent. All this completed, he sent the woman back. He waited there with his rifle between his knees till evening, but no one appeared. It seems that mutual friends had interfered, and induced Number one to forego his homicidal intentions. As an illustration, this occurrence is most apt.

In intercommunication, they are precise to an extreme. They have a word, which might be translated "it appears", which is used so punctiliously, that it is always possible to distinguish what a speaker has himself seen or heard, from second-hand information. In delivering a message, they are careful to use, as nearly as they can, the exact words spoken to them.

About promises, even without consideration, they affect to be very particular. The average white man, over and over again, says what he intends to do and thinks nothing of it if he should fail to carry out his intentions. There is no debt created, when one formulates projected action. But the Indian expects all to do exactly as they say. Their idea is that one should not speak inconsiderately; so they regard the white man as light and irresponsible.

Indian council meetings are very, very serious affairs. Men only attend, and they all sit round in a circle. Until the tale is complete those who have arrived gossip and chat. When all are there, the convenor rises, and officially states the reason of the meeting. One by one, those who have anything to say get on their feet and say it—gravely and ceremoniously. Objection is made and answered, till a decision is arrived at. Everything is well ordered and correct, and a spectator at these meetings would infallibly conclude that the Indian was of a most sober mind.

Not only collectively, but individually, the Indian always keeps control of himself, except to his intimates and under exceptional circumstances. He seldom betrays his feelings, and is always dignified in bearing. He leaves it to women and children to show that uncontrollable events can affect them. Some carry this stolidness to extremes. I have seen a man, two of whose children were at the point of death, playing cards in a neighboring house, apparently unconcerned. When I ventured to remonstrate with him, he explained "that grief could not help the sick. He could do nothing. The game diverted his mind." It was not that the man was hard-hearted but that he recognised the hand of fate. The women, however, make no pretence of stoicism; their grief is adequately worked off in such howls of lamentation as the occasion demands. On the death of any member of a family, every reminder of the deceased is given away, except some small article that can be stowed away in a portable bundle that is never parted with. This is kept in remembrance. Both male and female relations of the deceased loose their hair over their shoulders, and let it hang unkempt till their sorrow has abated. The women also gash their arms, and visible places of their bodies, and generally, make their mourning as unmistakeable as possible.

In private, however, the Indian wears none of this armour of austerity; he can laugh and joke with the rest, indeed they do not take life seriously enough, for with them existence seems to be one long song and dance—especially dance.

I never heard anyone who knew Indians say that they were thieves. That they carried on a series of retaliatory depredations on their enemies is beside the mark: there they were engaged in a professional, legitimate business. During the years that I lived on Reserves we never locked our doors, yet never had anything taken. Even the white men of those days seldom stole from each other. If an Indian happened on a cache of food out in the wilderness, he took what he wanted only if in desperate need, otherwise, he did not touch. If he came on anything on the trail, dropped by some one who had preceded him, he would place the article on the roadside, out of the track, and there it would remain till the owner came to retrieve his property. I once had a pony to dispose of, as it was too lazy for my purposes, and I offered it for sale at treaty time for twenty-five dollars. I was thoroughly nonplussed when a young Indian came along and told me he was willing to give thirty for the animal. I explained that I was letting it go for twenty-five but he persisted that it was worth thirty to him.

In old times, I used to admire the Indians' speeches; but times have changed, and oratory, with them, has become a lost art. But, to the unsophisticated savage's aptitude in this respect, it would be hard to do justice. It would be almost impossible to give a literal translation of an Indian's speech so full was it of hyperbole and irrelevant, airy fancies. Sometimes they would run on for a long time and leave no clear impression on the hearer's mind but gradually it would appear what the speaker was leading up to: they would build up their subject allegorically like a parable, and let the listener draw the inevitable conclusion. At its best, it would be like a figure appearing through a fog—first a shapeless mass and dim, but gradually growing more and more distinct, till it stood out clear and plain. The Indian liked to make speeches and, officially, never missed an opportunity: however, his orations were always works of art, and accomplished by their ornate eloquence a great deal more than mere bald, matter-of-fact begging or demanding would have done.

Every Indian is not an orator, but they are all adepts at "sounding"—that is weighing and gauging the influences that sway the person they are addressing, with a view to directing all their efforts to the weakest point. Their preliminary talk is all aimed at this, and what follows is an appeal, an argument, or a threat, as they have decided the occasion requires. I have watched this process over and over again, and wondered at it as often. First he will try to frighten you, and, if he finds this

is not working, will gradually change his tone till he has found the feeling you will respond to.

GAMES—

There is a game which has a sort of infatuation for the Indian, and to which he turns, more than to anything else for diversion. It resembles the old pastime of guessing in which hand an opponent hides the button, except that this is much more complicated, and that there is no guessing about it. Success depends upon ability to follow the adversary's thoughts—to gauge the workings of his mind.

A challenge is given, and there are mostly two or three on each side. After assembling, each side places a value on its opponent's stakes; that is, if one produces a blanket, the other values it. It is worth so many sticks, and the small sticks used as counters are handed over and so on with all the articles produced. If, in the progress of the game, one side is cleaned out, some fresh article is thrown into the ring, and the play is resumed. A blanket is spread on the floor—the counters staked all in view—with the selected players squatted in position on opposite sides. The things hidden are anything small enough to be held in the hand without making it noticeably bulky—the spiral wire used for extracting the load from an old-fashioned muzzle-loading gun is a favorite, or a brass button. There are two used, one called a 'double, and the other of lesser account. The hider kneels on the blanket, which lies out in front of him far enough to allow of it being pulled up over his thighs. He puts his hand under this flap to hide the buttons. He may leave both on the ground; he may have one in a hand and the other on the ground, or he may have one in each hand. The drum is beaten, and a song started, while the hider bends his head down so that his face is not in view, and shuffles the buttons under the flap of the blanket. Suddenly, he straightens up, and folds his arms, trying to keep his countenance blank, or working it into grimaces, that it may convey no information to the other side. The drum is now beaten by the hider's side with panicky vigor and all the noise and nonsense possible made to distract the attention of the guessing side. The man chosen as finder by his side, after a momentary and dramatic pause, shoots out his hand in the direction he supposes the buttons to be. Certain gestures in this respect have recognised meanings. If he finds the lesser button a counter is passed over to his side and he has another try for the greater. If he is again right he wins another counter and the buttons and drum change sides; if he is wrong he loses a counter and the performance is begun anew. During

the critical period of hiding and finding, everything known in the way of bandinage, is passed from side to side in the endeavor to fluster the opposition. When a hider or finder is repeatedly unsuccessful he is superseded by another. In this game success or failure depends entirely on being able to follow the workings of an adversary's mind. The hiding is not done haphazard, but according to plan and any scheme the mind has formed is bound to be betrayed by unconscious action. A novice will hide the buttons by chance, and is consequently hard to guess but when he becomes familiar enough to form plans of hiding, it is only a question of finding his system. It is not likely that sleight-of-hand is much practised as precautionary rules make trickery difficult. The game is often kept up for days at a time and the whole of a family's possessions may have changed hands at the end of it.

While on the subject of games, there is only one other that deserves notice. This is played with an ordinary pack of cards with the lower numbers taken out. It is called "marriage", follows common rules, and presents no feature of novelty to the civilised enquirer. It probably originated with Halfbreeds.

SWEAT-TENT

A diversion to which the Indians are excessively addicted—males, that is, not women and children—is the Sweat-Tent. It is rather an indulgence, since they treat themselves to it as often as twice a day. At every old camp one comes across the relics of this habit—a few granite stones, the size of one's head, in a hole in the ground.

A big fire is built, and the stones thrown in to the heat, while a bunch of willow sticks are cut, and stuck, butt ends into the ground, in a circle five or six feet across. The branch parts are brought together and interlaced into a rounded top, making a framework the shape of an overturned bowl. Over this frame blankets and robes are thrown for a covering. Inside, a hole, a foot in diameter and a foot deep, is dug out with a knife. A small kettle of water; a wisp of long grass, with the stones red hot, and the preparations are complete. A green willow, doubled into the form of pincers, is used to transfer the stones from the fire to the hole inside. The men—as many as the booth will accommodate, strip themselves to the breech-clout, and squeeze inside, when the covering blankets are closed to exclude the air. With the wisp of grass the water is now sprinkled on the hot stones and the steam arising fills the place till it oozes out through the cracks of the covering. Deep grunts, perhaps songs,

testify to the intense satisfaction of the bathers, who, when they have had enough, throw aside the coverings and emerge with the sweat streaming from every pore. They scoop off what they can of the water and dry themselves with a cotton rag or a handful of grass; then they pull on their leggings, wrap the blankets around their shoulders and wait, quite clean, for the next time. In winter the sweat-tents are erected inside their houses, which is easy, since the floor is of earth.

The Indians all testify to the wonderful refreshment they receive from the sweat-tent, and I find no reason to doubt them. I made the experiment once but was speedily and prematurely driven out by the suffocating steam, so that I cannot give personal confirmation of the claim; but, since the underlying idea is the same as that on which the Turkish bath is founded, the thorough cleansing the skin gets must have a refreshing effect.

In other respects, the Indians pay no attention whatever to cleanliness. They have no word for it. They wash in the Russian fashion. A mouthful of water is taken out of a cup and squirted on the hands, which are rubbed together a few times; another mouthful on the washed palms wets the face which is rubbed a little, and the process is complete.

CLOTHES—

Their clothes were never washed,—indeed, they had none to wash. A breech-clout, fringed leggings reaching the thigh, a blanket or robe—perhaps a cotton shirt—with moccasins for the feet—such is the men's costume; women wear leggings up to the knee, a short broadcloth or print skirt, with loose blouse and moccasins; they have no change of clothes. The young, unmarried people take great pains with their hair and apparel, using much brass and copper ornamentation. These also braid their raven locks and decorate their clothes and footwear with varicolored beads. Their garments of state, that is, those they dance in, are often nearly covered with beadwork in simple, geometrical designs. The leggings of the women are kept in place by a garter tied round the top. Generally speaking, their ideas are tawdry in the line of embellishment but, in many instances, both in men and women, the effect is striking and becoming, in fact, much as we see every day among our own people.

TENTS—

I have mentioned the shacks put up to spend the winter in, but there was always a respectable minority that braved it out in the tents. Some spot sheltered from the wind by sur-

rounding bush would be chosen; the lower inside of the tent lined with robes, and the inhabitants would be ready for any kind of weather that came along.

In the palmy days, the tents were made of buffalo leather from eight to fourteen skins in size, all sewn together and cut into correct pattern, then stretched on the same number of poles adjusted to form a cone. The poles, which are preferably of pine, as being the straightest, are about three inches thick at the butt and taper off at sixteen feet, to one and a half inches. Three of these poles are first tied together, a foot or so from the small end, and erected in tripod shape slightly smaller than the finished tent is to be, the others being laid in place all round with their butts slightly thrust into the ground. The covering is now thrown on, drawn into place, and fastened all up the front with wooden pins six inches long. An oval opening, nearly at the bottom of the seam is cut out to form an entrance, and to fit this, a stretched leather door is hung by strings. Some slight adjustment of the poles is necessary to make the covering tight; this is done from the inside, and the tent is ready for occupation. The right hand side as you go in, is set apart for the owner: the left is for dependents; opposite to the door is the visitor's place, while the part near the entrance, on both sides, is devoted to the few domestic necessities. In the centre is the fire. Robes and blankets are spread all round to sit on. The owner has an arrangement of small sticks some eighteen inches long, strung together in slatted fashion, which is fastened up in a slanting position for the man to lean against. His rifle will be conspicuously handy and any other weapons he may possess are in some readily accessible place. The women keep near the door. Dangling outside the tent, on a separate erection to suit, will hang the warrior's "war bonnet", and, likely, the family bundle, or "burden".

DOGS—

Comprised in the family of every Indian, will be, at least one dog—there are generally several. It is no sinecure to be an Indian dog. To those who have never seen what work a dog can do the canine of this country is an eye opener. In summer, hitched to a "travois", and in winter to a flat sled, the dog can haul nearly as much as a pony: and, unlike the horse, which requires unremitting attention—hunting it when it is grazing loose, and driving it when in harness—the dog is always on hand when required and follows on after the rest of the family when hauling his load on the road. When the place of sojourn-

ing is reached and the head of the family sallies forth to find the next meal, the dog goes along; he trails the scent, or brings the duck in to shore.

In short, he does his recognised share of the necessary work. There is not, as with us, a different kind of dog for each varied duty; there is only one species and it does what it has to do just as efficiently as our specialised animal. The Indian dog is trained up to all this. It may be that he knows the fate that would follow any inaptitude or slackness on his part, because, in that case, his master would speedily sacrifice him on the altar of necessity—in other words, kill and eat him. In addition to his other duties, the dog has to “rustle” his own living and in combining two responsibilities, acts as family scavenger. He is an accomplished thief and omnivorous, so that everything that by any stretch of imagination, could be deemed eatable, must be very, very securely stowed away. He quite enters into the clannish spirit of his master, hating everything alien, except food, and is distrustful of all attempts at a more amicable understanding. Woe betide the civilised dog that intrudes into an Indian camp; he is sure to be gobbled up.

CHILDREN—

Great rejoicing follows the birth of a male child. The father will announce the fact by firing off his gun. This is understood rightly and is replied to by a salvo from the whole camp. No such notice is given when the newcomer is a girl. Generally—but not always—the child, male or female, is given an official name and, when this ceremony is decided on, some old man is invited over to the tent. When he has been filled up with what things there are in store, he is asked to name the baby. The cognomen may be a fancy one, or it may be one borne by some departed relative, but all are distinguished by an ungrammatical construction that stamps them as proper names, though the root will sufficiently indicate the meaning. Besides the official name, a person will often have to answer to other appellations—a pet term, for instance, or the result of some deed, or even an incidental occurrence.

Indians are ostentatiously affectionate to their children; on no account will they chastise them, or even speak harshly to them; yet, strange to say, the result is good. While the children are small they are unbearably self-willed, but, after a few years have developed their perceptive and reflective faculties, they become as dutiful as they were heretofore disobedient and repay in deference and submission all the love their parents have lavished on them.

When a boy reaches an age to appreciate advice, the father will never lose an opportunity of impressing upon him maxims for the foundation of that traditional character which the Indian regards as perfect. Of course flesh—even Indian flesh—is weak and the boy is not always able to reach perfection but it is not for want of admonishing. The ideal is ever before him, and is passed from one generation to another.

As soon as the youth is big enough, he has a bow and arrows given him, so that he may become expert in archery; so expert that, at a short distance, the arrow was counted more dangerous than the Winchester rifle, owing to the speed with which successive arrows could be despatched from the bow. The arrows were of saskatoon wood straightened to a mathematical nicety with the teeth and hands. Three feathers, fastened securely on with wet sinew, guided its flight, while any piece of flat iron shaped on a stone, was let into a notch at the point just so that the iron would stick in a wound when the arrow should be withdrawn. Saskatoon wood, moreover, is so hard that when the arrow is well dried and well pointed, it will penetrate as effectively as if implemented with iron at the end; the all-wood arrow will not cause so dangerous a wound as the other. It was no uncommon thing for an arrow to be driven clean through a buffalo, when on the chase. The bow would be about four feet long let in the whole length, on the outside, to strengthen it. The string was of sinew.

To ride, the young Indian learned without knowing it. As soon as he was able, he took over the care of the family horses, which had to be kept under constant surveillance, husbanding them, as it were, and endeavoring to get a little flesh on their usually prominent bones. Indians are not adventurous riders and will not tackle the wild broncos that white men are constantly breaking in, but they will accomplish the same end by means of their own. They are merciless, but are able to get out of a horse everything that is in it. The Indian pony, be it ever so tame, regards the white man with inimical eye and sees only that he is of a strange and unfriendly species. Similarly does the white man's horse regard the red man. But, outside of his unsympathetic use of the horse, the Indian gives it unceasing attention. He finds the best feeding spots, drives it to water, and prevents it straying, and so gets the best use of the animal when need occurs.

The first thing the parents know, their son would skip off after a war party and be initiated into the expedients and dangers of that predatory warfare which was the chief business

of an Indian's life. If the youth be ambitious a period of fasting in the wilderness will either confirm or negative his hope of assistance from occult powers, and so to a great extent, shape his future action.

By this time, if not before, he would have a wife given him, or procured for him, when he would go to reside with his father-in-law. Here, he is a servant; looks after the horses, and, as far as he is able, takes the old man's place as provider for the household. He, and his wife's parents never address each other, indeed try to avoid looking at each other and pretend not to know each other's names. The young wife is their medium of intercourse. The couple, after a while, may find they do not suit each other, and separate, since the strength of the tie in Indian marriages depends essentially on compatability. True, a wife can be bought but if the woman be not a consenting party, the husband finds his hands full, till he lets her go. In any case, the man has to wait the girl's pleasure for consummation of the union. If the couple are in agreement, they remain with the old people—that is the wife's parents—till the husband becomes of sufficient importance, either in social or temporal affairs, to have his own tent, and, if necessary, to take the old people under his wing. In marriage, again, the young people often arrange matters themselves, beforehand, on the quiet: stolen interviews, clandestine arrangements, romance generally being no whit less common amongst Indians than amongst other peoples.

On the first sign of a girl attaining puberty a small tent is rigged up for her near-by and here she stays till all signs of her new status in life have disappeared. Besides the reason of uncleanness, I never could hear of any explanation of this practice, which is not continued afterwards. As soon as possible after reaching womanhood, the girl is bestowed in marriage. The idea in this, is to keep her out of mischief. Taking it altogether, the Indian regards the marriage tie very lightly. Men and women will marry over and over again, have offspring by several partners, and no perceptibly serious consequences ever follow.

It is considered the proper thing by Indian women to bear children no closer together than about three years; to have the one able to fend for itself, in some part, before being superseded by the next. This custom enforces continence on both male and female for long continuous periods; it also makes it easier to understand why both sexes find fewer objections to and more advantages in polygamy than we do.

The manner of "lying in" of Indian women is singular and interesting. On the approach of labor pains the old woman who is in attendance fastens two upright poles about three feet apart, in the tent vacated for the purpose, and a cross-bar is tied on these, two feet from the ground. A quantity of dried grass is thickly spread around and covered with an old blanket or something similar. On this carpet the sick woman kneels down, with legs apart, her breast against the cross-bar, supporting herself with her arms. In this position, she is rubbed and kneaded and, when necessary, held by the old attendant. Medicines designed to facilitate the birth are administered at intervals. The child drops on the soft bed prepared for it, is taken away to receive the usual attention and is forthwith swathed in the best that the family can afford. The mother continues to lean over the stick till freed from the afterbirth, for the ejection of which, when difficulty ensues, medicines are again given. Then she will lie down and suckle her new-born babe. She does not take long to recuperate and, though not strong for a day or two, often walks round the same day. I never heard of a case in which a woman was obliged to lie up for more than a few days after childbirth.

VORACITY—

A very important characteristic of the Indian is voracity. Previous experience had impressed me with a great opinion of the Englishman's appetite, especially when he is a newcomer, but, repeated observation has convinced me that as an eater he is not in the same class as an Indian. Living entirely in the open air would account for much of this faculty; also, the haphazard way in which an Indian takes his meals, together with his long abstinences, would tend to stretch his casual capacity for food, but, when everything is said, there still remains something to the good. At many of their ceremonies and at social functions generally, those who attend are supposed to finish up the dish of food set before them. To accomplish this, one may have to go outside and relieve one's stomach by vomiting. This they do and then return to complete the duty that custom imposes upon them. For animal food in particular they have an apparently insatiable craving. Naturally, after gorging themselves, they are able to do without food for a long time and, just as naturally, when the next chance offers, they are ready to gorge again. Animal food, "straight", has never the satisfying effect that results from a mixed diet: nor, again, is "wild meat" as rich as that of the domesticated animal. Tea, also is such a luxury to them that they take every chance to drink all they can inconveniently hold. Salt, they did not use and

sugar was only an occasional luxury. Yet, after all is said of the gastronomical peculiarities of the Indian, if one is taken and fed regularly on a mixed diet, his appetite fines down till it is no greater than that of any other person in the same circumstances.

LAZINESS—

I have never been able to make up my mind as to whether Indians are, or are not, lazier than other people. Labor, as strenuous as any the white man performs, has no terrors for the Indian, even under conditions that the white man would not put up with, but there are limits to the time he can remain under restraint, and not distant limits either. I believe, however, it is the restraint rather than the labor that is irksome. When these limits are reached he will throw off responsibility and go home; nothing will stop him. Conditions now are so essentially different from those which the inheritance of countless generations has formed him for; also the change from one to the other, took place, as one may say, over night, that it seems foolish to expect him to take up the "white man's burden" before years, not to say generations have passed.

It was the custom of the Plain Indians to herd together in little communities under some head-man. This might be one renowned for his valor or it might be a person of affluence, but it was always the man who, for the time being, exercised the greatest influence amongst and over the few families who, connected by kinship, travelled in company for mutual protection and for those social reasons which determine the customs of Indians no less than whites. There was no office attached to the position, and it was not hereditary. The place of the father might be stepped into by the son when the father died but it would be by reason of possessing the requisite qualifications in his own person.

In winter time, when the Indians were in small bands, spread over regions where their tribe was dominant, necessity for leadership and protection was not so pressing, while the advantages of cleaving to the company of a good hunter, or the man who owned plenty of horses, whose larder was sure to be well-filled, was evident. In such cases the head-man's word was law, while the warrior was nobody, and assumed nothing; but, when summer came, and the scattered bands converged for the buffalo hunt, the Crees and Stonies roamed the same plains as well as their enemies: then, the man of valor rose to the surface and took his natural position in the front. Thus,

in a large camp there might be many chiefs, from the bravest or richest, down to the patriarch of a few families.

The warrior, in all cases where he willed, was supreme. Had Indian etiquette permitted, the bravest might have robbed the richest and been immune. As it was, the protection of the warrior was good against anything and everybody. Let a stranger claim sanctuary, let even an enemy gain admittance to the war-chief's lodge and throw himself under the aegis of his name and he was safe as long as he stayed there. Custom afforded a qualified freedom from molestation within the confines of the camp, and such custom could not be defied without daring the protector's vengeance. So, in times of security the rich man was looked up to and obeyed, while, when danger threatened, the boldest came to the front.

THE SUMMER HUNT

When summer arrived, the Indians gathered together, and, in large companies, sought the game. Word would be carried round as to the whereabouts of the buffalo and instinct or experience told where the meeting place was likely to be. After a sufficient number had assembled, the first thing done was forming a band of "soldiers" or police. These practically chose each other, gathering into their company all the likely young men with those others who, it was known, could be relied on in emergency. The duration of their association was the length of the hunt, as determined in council; they automatically dissolved when the expedition returned to safety and their services were no longer needed. During their sojourn in the debatable land, where the enemy—like themselves—pursued the buffalo, discipline of some sort was indispensable—the safety of the camp demanded it—and this discipline it was the "soldiers'" duty to enforce. Once the camp was formed and the danger line crossed in the journey, no one was permitted to leave: once joined, all must stay till the hunt ended. If any turned aside, no matter for what reason, they were met or followed by the "soldiers" and brought back. If argument failed to bring the waverers to reason, command would be tried and, if all other means proved ineffectual, the tents and horses of the recalcitrants were destroyed. The "soldiers" also kept order in the camp and represented authority. Four of them were chosen to regulate the chase. When this was about to take place, all those who had horses fit to "run" the buffalo were kept together in line, so that the best mounted should not get any better start than those whose horses would never have got into the chase, had the swiftest been allowed to reap the full benefit

of their superiority. The "soldiers" kept the hunters from starting till the game had been approached near enough to give all classes of mounts an equal chance, and the camp as a whole, better results. This was a duty very necessary in a large camp and one difficult to fulfill; but the penalty of disobedience was severe and, what was more to the point, it was uncomfortably likely to be enforced.

These soldiers, when enrolling had a large tent made for them inside the circle of the camp, and there they appointed their meetings and danced. So far as I could either see or learn, there was nothing distinctive about their dress or equipment. Even in a very large camp each would know everyone else, both by name and by sight, and no token of office was needed to proclaim or emphasise what all knew. It was the force they could exert that secured obedience where sentimental respect for their office would have proved powerless. Theirs it was, also to watch over the camp; to say when it should be moved and whither; theirs also to scout on ahead before the removal, and on the journey: in short, to govern generally the little federation during its existence. The technical name of these "soldiers" was "Blades of Grass"—why, I could never find out.

Once the camp was formed, it would proceed in search of the buffalo and, when they were found, would follow the herds around till fall warned the hunters to turn homewards and seek winter quarters.

The Plain Indians were meat eaters from long habit and so fixed had that habit become that all other eatables had, to them, lost their character of food. The natives of the farther north, though they often joined the summer hunts after the buffalo, made fish—with which the lakes and rivers teemed—their chief article of diet, with the smaller wild life to supplement their bill-of-fare. These Indians were expert with the shot-gun and waged successful war against the fur bearing inhabitants of the woods. To these people, therefore, the invasion of the white man meant nothing more than a slow retreat northward if they were disinclined to settle on Reserves and conform to the requirements of the strangers. They were, moreover, peaceable and mild-spirited.

In an Indian camp, the tents were always pitched in a circle, each little clan herding together. This made a fence inside of which the horses, in case of necessity, might be kept. In the centre of this circle were planted the lodges of the chiefs.

Any one whom the people delighted to honor, would be moved there, to concert with those who had aforetime won distinction. The horses would be allowed to graze outside in the daytime but were brought into the fence at dusk. An especially prized animal might, for additional safety, be tethered to his owner's tent-peg, or even to part of his person, at night. In the case of encampment, stones were often gathered and placed round the outside of the lodge, to form a buttress in the event of attack: but, generally speaking, numbers gave ample security.

When the soldiers proclaimed the chase—by means of a caller going the rounds—everyone who possessed a horse that stood a chance of nearing the buffalo got ready and joined the assemblage of hunters. They were formed in line by the soldiers, and started out toward the herd at a pace regulated by the slowest. As soon as they were near enough to give the poorest horse a look in a helter-skelter rush was made to get within gunshot. As each animal fell, its slayer dropped some article by which to recognise his property and again took up the chase. Bows and arrows, muzzle-loading guns—even flintlocks—and a few rifles were the weapons. With these first-named, the Indians were quite dexterous, often, it is said, sending an arrow completely through the body of a buffalo. The arrows were carried in a quiver on the back, in such a position that the bearer, by throwing his right hand just over the left shoulder, could grasp an arrow. The drawing of the arrow, the fitting on the bowstring and the discharging are three movements merged into one, so perfect is their continuity. The guns, as discharged, are loaded again while racing:—a measure of powder poured into the muzzle haphazard, next a bullet rolled down the barrel from a store kept in the mouth, with a cap from a little circular leather arrangement on which they are stuck—and the hunter is ready for the next shot: no wads or paper or anything to keep each part of the load in its place. Of course the gun barrel must be kept in a semi-upright position till it can be aimed and discharged at the same moment. Many were the hands maimed, fingers blown off and other mischances by guns bursting owing to the bullet sticking in a dirty barrel.

Not only in summer-time was the buffalo hunted. In winter, when a camp got out of food, a hunting party would be organised, with flatsleds and horses to bring in the meat and runners to chase the game with. If the snow lay deep, snowshoes were substituted for horses. Only experience can give an idea of the hardships of such an expedition; only imagina-

tion can picture the strain on endurance and the narrow margin of escape when the unexpected happened, with the extreme cold, the piercing winds and the shelterless prairie. The Indian, however, had learned to deal with the elements so that casualties from natural dangers were rare.

The user of a Winchester rifle had the advantage of being able to choose his quarry; those with inferior equipment must take what they could get. The fattest were, as far as possible, picked out for slaughter. Running the buffalo was the work of the young men, while the old accumulated the equipment. With two or three buffalo-runners and a couple of rifles, one could be sure of plenty to eat, and numerous adherents. Hence, a Chief.

When a sufficient number had been slaughtered the hunters returned home. Carts and "travois"—a travois is a conveyance made of two poles fastened in the shape of "A"; the small angle is fixed on the back of a horse or dog, while the other ends trail on the ground, and the burden rests on the cross-stick—all sorts of contrivances are brought into use for carrying the meat home. The whole camp joins in the fun of bringing it in.

The Indian has his own way of butchering—as in many other things—and he is not unskillful. First, the head of the dead animal is twisted round under its shoulder so as to support the carcass nearly fair on its back. The feet are dislocated and skinning proceeds on the side most exposed. The head is then turned the other way and the head tilted slightly to that side, so that the hide may be easily cut from the backbone. The loose skin is then spread out, that the flesh may not touch the ground. The meat along each side of the backbone is cut away clean, to secure the long sinew intact. Next the short sinews under the shoulderblade. Then the legs are taken off and the ribs chopped from the backbone. Over goes the carcass again, and all this is repeated. All the severed parts are thrown into the conveyance, leaving the insides and head on the hide to be picked over. The tongue, liver and the "book" part of the stomach are then taken. The tongue is a tit-bit, while the liver and "book" are eaten raw, in which condition they are accounted great delicacies.

In times of great plenty, the flesh would all be skinned from the bones and the latter left, with the insides, to be taken by those not fortunate enough to have meat of their own. In skinning an animal, no care was taken to cut the hide clean of

meat, rather the contrary course obtained, so as to avoid all possibility of injuring the skin.

Once the products of the chase came to the tents, they became the property of the women, who now took charge of everything. Their first care—the principal one—was to dry the meat, after cutting the sinews away clean. These last were scraped clear of flesh, carefully smoothed and hung up to dry, in which state they could be pulled into fibres, moistened and rolled into threads of any required thickness, exactly as our shoe-makers do. Then to the meat:—with a chunk of flesh in one hand and a knife in the other, the outside was cut away spirally, till the meat was one long strip, as thin as it could be got; these strips would then be strung on sticks or hung on a line, like clothes, to dry. If the flies were bothersome, a smoke lit underneath drove them away. This process was followed till all the flesh was cut up. The marrow-bones were set aside for the time being, to be eventually broken up between stones, and boiled for the fat they contained, a fat much prized.

Next the hides claimed attention. While still moist and pliable, they were stretched tight on a frame of the proper size by lines through holes cut all along the edges; this arrangement was placed in a slanting position, well supported, while a woman or two of them, squatted on the hide and punched the film of flesh from the skin, till all was clean. The instrument used, was home-made. A piece of metal—about eight inches of an old gun barrel* served—flattened and about two inches wide at the tool end, where it was sharpened, and notched into teeth with a file. The handle part was round and covered with leather to make it easier on the hand, and furnished with a wrist-loop. With this implement they dug away between the flesh and the skin till the former was completely wrenched from the latter. The hide was then dried, and put away, to be tanned at some future leisure time. This further operation is performed by scraping the stiff hide bare of hair and of uniform thickness in all parts; moistening it with grease, liver, and brains, well rubbed in; then pulling and working it till soft and pliable. This last is the most important part of the treatment and entails a tremendous amount of hard labor.

The woman's work was to look after the tent; to fetch wood and water; to cook, mend, and take care of her children. In her spare moments she was to do bead-work, or anything else that took her fancy in the line of decoration, either for her husband or herself and family.

* Or a bone.

The man looks after the horses, unless he has a son, son-in-law or other dependent young man to do it for him; he also finds provisions and visits round. His principal avocation seems to be scouring the country on horseback; of this they never appear to tire. They ride from one hill to another gazing round—always on the look-out. Their sight is very keen and little escapes their observation or confounds their power of deduction.

In the tent, the kettle is kept on the fire the whole time in case somebody should drop in for it is a rule absolute that every visitor be offered food—the best available—which it is incumbent on the visitor to consume. This sounds much more formidable than it really is. When meat—wild meat—is the sole food and is eaten without salt, to eat frequently and at short intervals does not inconvenience one as greatly as would be thought; it is variety that satiates. For drink, if the hostess has no tea, the liquid in which the meat was boiled is given. A decoction of raspberry twigs, if such are handy, or Labrador tea are occasional alternatives. Speaking of tea, the Indian's thirst is positively unquenchable. There is no limit to the quantity he will consume.

But, although the Indian is naturally carnivorous, he can eat vegetables on a pinch and for variety. There grows on the bare hillsides a small bulbous root which is dug in quantity when opportunity offers; it is nearly tasteless but useful for thickening soups. The root of the tiger lily; another root that bears a deceptive resemblance to the carrot; the soft, subaqueous parts of water plants, like the rush; all these occasionally are eaten; in fact I don't think I am competent to draw the line as to what cannot—by virtue of necessity—be eaten by Indians. But by choice they like the best; all else is a question of expediency.

The sap of the common poplar occupies a place as a delicacy. In the early summer—June, or even July—this is available. Small trees are selected and a cut made right round the bark, which at that period is loose, can be peeled off, almost in one piece. With a knife, the clean wood is then scraped upwards, collecting the sap, which is slightly saccharine and not unpleasant to the taste. All experience goes to show that it is very hard to starve the Indian to death.

In good times the Indian spends all his leisure in feasting and dancing, and of these latter diversions and observances notice will be taken later on.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS—

The woman, in her own sphere, is absolute; the man would never think of interfering with her disposition of anything round the tent, except his own peculiar possessions. Nor does the woman seem to work any harder than her white sister; indeed, the relative positions of the woman and the man are not nearly so widely different as is generally supposed. Nominally, the wife is subject to her husband; practically she stands no more in awe of him than do the wives of the white race and, not infrequently, "bosses him around".

But, where the man has more than one wife, it would often be necessary that he exercise his authority to keep the peace. This difficulty, however, in no way deterred any whose horses were numerous and good buffalo runners, from taking a plurality of wives. The more horses, the more robes; the more robes, the more help required to tan them, and so on. If the women quarrelled, each was given a tent of her own; then the husband gave his attention and most of his time to each in turn, while the other had a small child to occupy her. And this equal treatment appeared to satisfy them. Numbers of men had two wives, some, even three or four. Not infrequently, too, the man would be a great deal older than his wives.

There was practically only one way of obtaining a wife—a present must be made to her father—generally one or more horses—and the hand of the girl requested formally. But this, in many cases, was only the last stage of the courtship. They might be young people and mutual attraction have progressed through various incidents to the intimacy which culminates in marriage. Here, the youth or his parents make the gift that their means and the expectations of the girl's parents deem suitable. But, the man may not be in a position to reinforce his amatory ambition with suitable support. Innumerable impediments might delay or preclude marriage and the young people take the matter into their own hands and attain their end by eloping.

Again, the father of marriageable daughters might take the initiative and give a bride to a promising young man, but he would be much disappointed if he did not receive a horse or service in recognition of his complaisance. In such case the courtship would begin with the marriage. With an elderly man, it is neither more or less than buying but he must conciliate his bride or she will go back to her father. There is no ceremony attached to marriage and still less to the dissolution of

the connection. If everything went well and the bridegroom was young, he became a member of his father-in-law's household.

FIRE—

In those early days, matches were yet too much of a luxury to be indulged in recklessly by natives. True, they no longer used the original method of making fire by twirling a piece of wood with a bowstring, and still practised the newer, but still primitive method of striking a spark with fint and steel. For this purpose the Hudson's Bay Company sold a specially devised steel—a piece of metal one half inch wide by one eighth thick, five inches long, bent till the two ends met; flints were to be had for the picking up and tinder was procured from the mushroom-like excrescences growing on the birch tree. These last, when dry, were very inflammable and well filled the place of cotton which cost money. I was very anxious to see one of the old-time implements for starting a fire but, though I came across many old men who had used them in their younger days and could describe them with the exactitude of familiarity, yet it was so long ago since they had given place to the newer method, that I was never able to see a practical illustration of the original method. But while there can be no doubt that fire might be produced by these tools, yet their possession and familiarity with their use would inspire small confidence in one about to undertake a journey in winter, where the hands got so benumbed with cold that even matches often prove slow enough to start the welcome blaze.

LANGUAGE—

Nor, though I was intensely interested in tracing the inhabitants of this vast country to their origin, could I ever get information that went any way towards solving that problem. The Crees state that they came from the East: this theory—if it be no more than a theory—is confirmed by the fact from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, in Canada, the languages spoken all show an affinity so decided, as to be classed fundamentally as one. This applies too, to some across the border. Algonquin, Ojibway, Saulteaux, Fox, Swampy and Cree—all speak the same tongue, varied dialectually by circumstances and isolation. I have heard of some tribes of Indians in the Middle Western States who must come from the same stock since they are sufficiently intelligible to the Crees for the latter to claim kindred with them.

The Indians of the far North-West would, from their language, appear to have come from the other side of the moun-

tains. The Sioux and Stoneys are practically the same people separated at some recent date. These last, with the tribes that form the Blackfoot confederacy, differ so greatly from the Crees and each other, as to place their separation far back in the ages. Yet the building of all is the same.

Without making any pretence as to the depth of my researches or the correctness of my conclusions, I was much taken with the Indian languages and with the kind assistance of officials of the Smithsonian Institute, have given the subject some study. The structure of all that I have examined is fundamentally the same; they will dissect into numbers of roots which with prefixes and affixes, are assembled at the call of the speaker's mind, and, as far as they go, give infinite variety and fine shades of meaning to an eloquent person. Again, they are languages of verbs. Nearly everything that is expressed in English by a noun is given a verbal form and subjected to declension as such. This peculiarity, more than anything else, it is that renders the perfect acquisition of an Indian language so difficult and rare. In the case of European languages one may think in English and get quite passable French out of the thoughts by a nearly literal translation. With Indian languages this would be impossible; an interpreter must make the change in his mind, and give forth the impression made by the one language, in the form of the other.

There is a very narrow limit to the expression possible by means of Indian speech. Generalities are difficult. Exactly the same thing can hardly be said in more than one way, whereas in English one may use either Anglo-Saxon or Latin and get the same meaning in both cases. On the other hand, the system of root-building and verbal formation add much to the flexibility of Indian tongues. Very fine shades of meaning and meticulous detail are not merely possible but obligatory. When an Indian tells of a thing being done, he has to say how it was done, giving by incorporation and adjustment, almost the when, the where and the how.

On relationship, the Indian shines brilliantly. He is a pretty poor genealogist indeed, who is unable to find in every other, some connection. Examination of the alleged tie of kinship may reveal an exiguity that seems absurd to a stranger, but they place such value on consanguinity, that names are given to even the most remote. Also, the relationship rather than the name is always used in addressing each other. The pretence is also commonly made of not knowing each other's names. This peculiarity I could never fathom.

DANCES—

Besides gambling, the only, or at any rate, the principal diversion of these people, is the "Tea Dance". This name is not the native original one but is that given by white men, to distinguish it from other Indian ceremonies into which dancing enters. To me, it always appeared most dull and monotonous, but to many white men it appeared an unfailling attraction. Those who participate must find some inspiration, either in the exercise or the stuff they drink, for it is indulged in to an extent that proves its exceeding popularity.

The biggest kettle obtainable is boiled full of water; whatever tea is devoted to the debauch, with a plug or two of chewing tobacco, or pain-killer if they have any, is then poured into the kettle and infused till the liquid is of a rich, black color, when it is ready for drinking. The Indians sit round in a circle—either inside or out, according to circumstances, the men on one side and women on the other, each bearing a cup of some sort into which the "tea" is dished out periodically by a master of the ceremonies. Songs are started to the accompaniment of a drum, in which all join. Soon, the "tea" begins to work and they one after another get up and dance. The drum beats time to the singing, while men and women dance till the song ends, which is the signal for all to drop down into their places. Another song is begun, and the performance is repeated. The songs are monotonous but the rhythm is good and some of the tunes are not unpleasing. While this is called a dance it would hardly conform to our ideas of dancing either ancient or modern. It consists of sudden bendings of the knees, to give the body an up-and-down motion taking, at the same time, short steps of a few inches to the side. This sideward movement will carry each person round the circle to the original position all to the two thirds measure of the drum.

MAGIC RITES—

Mention must not be omitted of the "magic" of the Indians. This may be divided into second sight, dream knowledge, and incantation. Second sight appears to be a natural gift; the others are acquired. Not a few of the Indians possess second sight in various degrees and in different ways. Their surroundings seem to be particularly favorable for its reception and cultivation and also for unquestioning faith in its oracles. Occultism, in one or other degree, is common all over the world. Those of grosser fibre divine by the laws of coincidence; the adept receives an inspiration and prophesies. That his or her prophecy

is not seen to be fulfilled may not be the fault of the prophet. Those lower in the occult scale know that when they are taken with sneezing, someone is telling tales about them and that when an eyelid twitches, something out of the common is about to be seen. In fact, the idea and belief in it, are universal, and there appears to be enough truth in such divinings to warrant the faith.

Certain Indians—among other people—have this sense of coming happenings quite pronounced and definite; instinct, sometimes indescribable, yet at others distinct, tells that a certain event is approaching and very often tells the truth. As an example—one with the gift will tell the camp that a stranger is about to arrive. The cause of the statement is a feeling powerful enough to be described. Perhaps the statement goes further and classifies the person who is coming. It has been explained to me as an unusual sensation, followed like a flash by the conviction as stated. The sensation may be in any part of the body. This is not an explanation that explains very clearly, but it is all I could get.

I came across an Indian, living on Lake Winnipeg who seemed able to foretell the advent of strangers and, to the best of my recollection, unfailingly. Perhaps an approach to understanding all this may be made by remembering that these people are in a state of nature; that the functions of the body and of the mind are neither clogged nor weakened by excesses; and that their existence is spent altogether in the solitudes.

Those who prophesy from dreams do not, in any way that I could distinguish, differ from white prophets of the same grade, but magicians are in a different class; they make most extravagant pretensions and their failures are not always easily pinned down. They can send "messengers" to a person, at any distance, that will penetrate the body and, unless removed by an agency similar to that which despatched it, will cause death. Therefore, when sickness attacks a person and ordinary remedies fail to cure, it is supposed to be the work of an enemy and another "magician" is employed to counteract the spell.

This man is given a tent—erected for the purpose—to conjure in. He takes in with him what, to the eyes of the uninitiated, looks and makes a noise like a rattle, but which is really, the most important implement of the conjuror, for the "see-see-gwun-is" is neither more nor less than the connecting link between those who know how to use it and the Spirit World. Often, he has sufficiently powerful connection to allow himself

to be bound hand and foot (just as our own mediums are)—and bundled into the tent, when his rattle is thrown after him. In this case, his Familiar unbinds him—exactly as they do with us—and the next item in the performance is to see the cords with which he has been tied thrown through the opening of the tent.

The rattle is now heard to have gone wild within the tent, beating against the sides as though possessed. Voices are also heard; these, the hearers are to consider as belonging to the Familiar Spirits. The tent rocks to its foundations—so to speak. When his incantations are completed, he confirms the diagnosis of the friends of the afflicted and proceeds to suck the missile out of the sick person's body. Descriptions of this thing are always remarkably alike; dark in color, the size of a ten-cent piece, and flat-ovoid in shape. It may be taken from any part of the body. Its nature however, appears to be so deadly that extraction seldom avails and death too often ensues, despite all the magician's efforts. This might easily be because help was called in too late. They are very expensive, these specialists, and must be paid a retainer in advance. They are held in great awe and do, and say everything possible to keep up or increase their reputation. When a person dies, they omit not to hint at the probability of a different result had they not been given offence or had they been called in, or had they been propitiated. To the Indians themselves, who may not care to brave the displeasure of the Unknown Powers, or even to the sceptical who are not hunting for trouble, these "magicians" pass at their face value; indeed, I have known Halfbreeds, whom I credited with more sense, employ them; but to the unprejudiced observer, they glare as arrant humbugs.

On more than one occasion I have gone out of my way openly to cast ridicule on these performers, and court the dire vengeance sure to follow but, when nothing serious happened to me, the Indians explained the result by alleging the immunity of white people and the faith remained undisturbed.

Another branch of the black art relates to the obtaining of information about the past, present, or future. Here, several methods give choice. One is appropriately spectacular and an incident occurs in illustration.

A party, consisting of a man, a woman, and a girl about ten years old, went on an expedition hunting duck eggs, to a long, grassy lake about ten miles from the encampment. The

three of them rode in a cart drawn by one pony and, at the near end of the lake, the man got out to search the grass along the left side; the girl took the right side, while the woman drove on with the rig, taking a short cut to a point where all would again meet. When the man and woman came together at the far end of the lake, the girl was missing. They waited for a while for her to come up and when she failed to appear, walked back over her supposed track, searching. She had disappeared. They hunted backwards and forwards, in the water and in the long grass, again and again—no girl. Not a trace of her could they find and, having exhausted their efforts, hitched up and returned to the encampment. "And then there was hurrying to-and-fro"—a hundred or more people looked for the girl for three days: first in a haphazard and then in a systematic and exhaustive manner, and found her not.

So they had recourse to a magician. A lodge was prepared for him, inside of which a stockade was made by sticking poplar sticks into the ground close together in a circle a few feet in diameter. These sticks were secured together at the top by lines and the walls covered in by means of robes and blankets. Into this cylinder the magician, tangled and tied up with as much cunning as possible, was inserted through the top as gently as might be and his rattle thrown after him. Almost at once the rattle got into action and began to shake and the voice of the magician was heard to sing in a most satisfactory manner. Squeaky noises joined in, marring the harmony. After this had continued for some time the lines that had bound the man's limbs came hurtling out of the top of the cylinder which then started rocking to and fro till it burst altogether and the magician emerged from his little closet. He proceeded to impart the information given him by the Familiar he had invoked. The girl was dead—we were told. Her body lay near a certain described lake where search should be made. The girl's spirit, it appeared, had talked with him, but was so overcome by the presence of her parents, that no details of her wanderings were forthcoming.

In conformity with the inspired directions, the lake indicated, and all the country round was hunted: in fact the search was conducted over again but no trace of the lost girl could be found. She was accordingly mourned as dead.

About three weeks afterwards, some Indians caught a glimpse of suspicious movements in the bushes near the camp, and, following up, pulled forth the lost girl. Except that she was thin and frightened, she seemed little the worse for her

experiences but never could give any sensible account of her wanderings. She had probably kept life in her by eating roots, berries and such water bulbs as she knew and could find. This happened in the early days and the girl grew up, married and had children but her mind ever remained a blank as to those three weeks and it is concluded that the shock of being lost had, for the time being, shaken her reason.

In the Lake Winnipeg region, while the Hudson's Bay Company and the Free Fur-traders used the water routes of the North-West in going to-and-fro between the settlements and their winter quarters, it was common practice to fee a conjuror for the production of a fair wind. Very often, they seem to have got it. It was not necessary that the offering be valuable; the Governing Spirits considering the fact rather than the intrinsic value of the oblation. This branch of occultism was taken advantage of by many who professed unbelief in the practice, as well as by those who had full faith in it.

The leader of a war party was generally a proficient in the art of learning beforehand by his incantations the outcome of the venture he was starting. It is admitted that prognostications of this kind did not always prove correct and also that the detail given of itinerary and adventure did not coincide with the result; but, the fact that some inspired leaders did in the main foreshadow the general event on every occasion, and that specially gifted men could forecast each move and counter-move as well as tell the ending, was regarded as sufficient demonstration of the truth and worth of the practice.

Many are the tales told of forays into the southern country for horses. The country of the Crees, the debatable ground between the bush and the prairie, was not, and still is not, favorable for horse raising. The grass grows luxuriantly but is killed by frost in the fall and is devoid of nutriment: the prairie grass is of sparse growth, has a short season and is dried before frost by the hot sun. Horses turned out on the prairie will hold their own, if not fatten up, in winter; in the bushy lands of the further north, animals are quite likely to starve to death. The Crees and Stoneys, who roamed the northern country often had to replenish their supply by foray. The following is one of the tales told of marauding expeditions.

THE FORAY OF OLD BONE—

In the old days before war and rapine were discontinued, there were Indians who were either specially lucky or specially gifted in all their expeditions into the enemy's country;

such a man was "Old Bone". Any adventure that he led was invariably attended with more or less success. Consequently, when it was whispered round the camp that Old Bone projected a foray there were not wanting young men whose aspirations to fame and desire for loot would induce them to brave any danger they might incur by joining his band of marauders. Indeed, they were so eager as frequently to cause him embarrassment. Such expeditions were never discussed beforehand and such knowledge of them as people had was supposed to be the result of intuition. On one memorable occasion it became understood that Old Bone contemplated going on the war-path and that he wished to limit the number of his companions to five. It was the custom on these occasions that any adventurer joined solely on his own initiative, so Old Bone was watched very carefully that he might not slip off unawares, while all those who intended to follow him hastened their preparations. This meant an extra pair of moccasins and leather, sinew and needle: also dried meat. Arms were always ready. When the time was deemed propitious, at dead of night, Old Bone sneaked off. His camp-fire was made no great distance off and here it was the proper thing for him to await those who should join him. When he counted heads, there were thirty-three; he was not pleased at this testimony to his popularity since, for some occult reason he wished to limit the number of his company, but etiquette prevented his complaining. They ate a little dry meat, washed it down with water, and got what rest they could on the bare ground. They were in their own country so, all next day, they journeyed south-west. That night when they camped, it was thought advisable to get Old Bone to consult his Familiar as to the outcome of the expedition. Round a small fire all were nested when the pipe was lighted and handed to the leader. To north, to south, to east and to west, up, down, he pointed the long pipe-stem, then in silence he sat and smoked. In a little while he handed the pipe back again and pulled from the folds of his blanket coat a doll about six inches long fashioned to resemble somewhat a human being. A small bell was hung to its clothes and it was mounted on a short stick, which he proceeded to shove into the ground on the far side of the fire. Then he sang. Sang till the bell on the doll began to jingle. He suddenly stopped his song while the tinkle of the bell went round the circle and eventually settled over Old Bone's head and died down. After a few moments he spoke. "Likely you don't understand him, so I will tell you what he says. We shall not come to any harm, but we must watch the sun tomorrow, for at noon, we shall see seven men. If we wish we can kill them

but, if we do, we must turn right back and go home. If we allow them to go untouched we may proceed and we shall be given horses." The relief and satisfaction of the listeners was vented in exclamation. "Let them live. Who wants them? It is horses we are after." And thus it was settled. Before day-break the next morning they resumed their way, with two men ahead to give them warning of the expected enemy. Anxious glances were cast at the sun as he approached the zenith, and to the spies ahead for the signal that the foe was in sight. This was given about noon when all lay down in a deep buffalo wallow, whence, in hiding they could watch the motions of the spies. One was lying on his belly on the side of a little hill, while the other crept slowly towards the strangers. He motioned. Seven they were; on foot; resting in a little hollow. They, also, were on a raid of some kind. Great excitement now prevailed. All seemed to have forgotten their former decision to let the men free and go after horses. Many of the younger and more easily moved could with difficulty be restrained from rushing out of cover and annihilating the enemy at once: they appeared so easy a prey. Old Bone, when approached for a decision, would say no more than "Just as you like. Do as you please." The older heads gained the day. The party could eat while waiting for the way to clear, but would have to go on for water. Meanwhile the spies would watch the enemy. Each spy was provided with a complete wolf costume, dressed in which, if seen from a distance, prowling about, they would not cause alarm. With this arrangement, the band lay quietly in their hiding place while the spies kept in touch with the enemy. So they waited. And waited, till the waiting got to be too much for their excited spirits. The spies had long since disappeared in the rolling landscape and the impatient Indians, each tying a string of sage-brush over his forehead—so that he could pop his head over the edge of a hill and if descried be mistaken for a bunch of weeds—set off cautiously in single file in what they took to be the right direction. Taking advantage of the inequalities of the land, they kept on to where they divined the watering place to be, but no sign of the spies. They counselled together, and men were despatched to crawl up every rise in the vicinity to find out what had become of the missing spies. While those left were pondering the mystery, a figure was seen on the top of a hill, to wave his blanket to-and-fro. This was a signal to advance, and thither they all flocked. Even the spies turned up. And, far away to the west could be dimly seen some specks disappearing over the horizon. They spent the rest of that day near the watering place. From now on they intended

to travel by night and before they started, it was considered the proper thing to give Old Bone the pipe again, and so get in touch with future happenings. So they lighted a small fire and prepared the pipe. The seer, after repeating his performance with the pipe and doll, announced that the horses provided for them were waiting at the Red Deer River at a described place. That the enemy's camp was not a large one, that they would reach it the third night, that there were many horses waiting to be appropriated and that they would get home safely without harm. And all turned out as predicted. They got in touch with some hundred or so lodges of Blackfeet camped in the valley of the river and stayed two days in hiding, picking out their prospective prizes. The third night they made their raid. Each man got for himself what he could. They got off with forty horses. For twenty-four hours they rode, then, considering that they had outrun pursuit, made their way leisurely home. But raids did not always end so satisfactorily.

The "adept", who can "send" things, I have heard a good deal of, but have never been so fortunate as to meet. Those, also, who are able to turn themselves into wolves, and other wild creatures—for the purpose of waylaying their enemies, and seriously injuring them—I know only by the awe-inspiring tales I have heard. When I have met these miraculous narrators with unmistakeable unbelief and have expressed the curiosity I felt by the offer that some of these wonder-workers should practice on me, I have been told that the white man has not been found a plastic subject by the professors of the black art. They, in fact, have proved immune. However, the Indians appear to believe unreservedly all these things, and their actions and lives are colored accordingly.

The war-bonnets are all supposed to be fashioned under inspired direction and auspicious circumstances, wherefore, belief in their efficacy is universal and unlimited. Perhaps I should say "appears to be" instead of "is", for surely there must be doubting Thomases among Indians as amongst other people—those whose faith has been rudely shaken, or those who never had any faith at all, but who encourage the blind belief of others for purposes of their own. These war-bonnets are the subjects of constant, reverential care, and in camp are generally hung on a tripod outside the tent, along with the little bundle of relics of lost relatives. They are gaudy and cumbersome, and approximate the stereotyped Indian head-dress that we find in pictures.



Dressed for the Dance

I—from a height, of course—have tried every way to combat these foolish beliefs, especially the blind acceptance of impudent bluffers at their self valuation. I have tried argument. I have tried ridicule; I have tried pity and I have tried disgust: and the result has been to undermine rather the Indian's estimate of my perspicacity than the faiths that have been accepted without question by generations of his forefathers. Time probably, and rubbing up against the white man are the only things that will effect change.

After all, these things are interwoven with what might be called the religion of the Indian, a religion which we are trying to supersede by another. We are, therefore interested parties, and to say the least, not without prejudice. The Indian's beliefs suited him and suited his circumstances, which was all sufficient. He carefully abstains from making rude remarks concerning the beliefs that are being pressed upon him—not because he is awe-struck by their sublimity, and not because he does not see that they require as great a stretch of faith as his own, but because he perceives there can be no certain conclusions reached and that disputation must be futile. He considers the white man as thoughtless and aggressive and naturally weighs the Gospel he is asked to accept along with the white man as he sees him; and into these cold scales of probability, the thousand years of acceptance by habit are not thrown. The only make-weight that he puts in the balance is the prosperity of the white man as compared with his own poverty. Even to that, he gives only a nominal consent. He will permit himself to be baptised—that can do no harm. He will even be baptised many times, as there are often immediate temporal advantages. His private opinions, however, remain unchanged; he will watch the white man. Such is the Indian's attitude. After a few generations, baptism will become a habit and the routine of professedly Christian behaviour gradually supervene till the Indian's "religion" is the same as the white man's.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS—

What we would call the religious beliefs of the Indian are hard for even him to define. He believes in the Great Spirits of Good and Evil, both of which influences manifest themselves in mundane affairs, and which appear to be in continual conflict, with varying success on each side. He has a hazy idea of a future existence in a Heaven after his own mind, where all men, good and bad, will live again under better conditions. But, what we call Heaven and the future life, are not uppermost in the Indian's mind. The present is too close at hand—

too pressing, to be relegated to any second place: also, advantages that are definite, even if only temporal, and that can be appreciated by experience, far outweigh and completely overshadow the dubious delights of a future existence. So, when the Indian prays, he prays for something in this world, not in the ~~next~~; that will take care of itself. He reverences the Supreme Being as the Source of Life. He prays to the Thunder Bird as the Arbiter of Life and Death; and he prays to his Familiar—if he has one. He asks for health, and long life and for achievement of his ambitions. During sickness or stress he offers his tribute, according to his necessities and his means—a gun, a garment, an implement of any kind, a yard or two of calico or broadcloth—carefully stowed away in some solitude or hung from the branches of a tree in such infrequented place as to be unmistakeable for anything but what it really is. To meddle in any way with these offerings is supposed to incur the dire displeasure of the Power to whom it is dedicated.

Vows of various kinds are made to these Dieties and are mostly kept. In honor of, and to propitiate the Thunder Bird, is celebrated the Thirst or Sun Dance, which is the greatest public religious ceremony of the Indians: but, since this is now, for some years has been, and, in all likelihood, is destined to remain under the ban of the authorities, its glory has departed, for it is now held only surreptitiously and in such out-of-the-way places as to avoid coming under the official eye. Why this ceremony remains in such disfavor at Ottawa, is puzzling. In olden times, while the Indian was still an object of possible dread, all such aggregations suggested situations that might be difficult to deal with. They were obstructed as much as was safe: they could not be forbidden. Yet the country came safely through. To associate danger with them in these days would be ridiculous. The Indian, in large bands or small, is now absolutely under the control of those whose duty it is to look after him and keep him out of mischief. Nor, as it would not be dangerous, neither would it be undesirable: it would incommode, it would interfere with nobody and nothing. In olden days, the objection of cruelty might well have been raised as a reason for abolishing the Dance, but now all such elements have been dropped by the votaries, out of deference to the white man's more delicate susceptibilities. Also, from the Indian's point of view, this celebration is the only chance the natives have, once a year, of meeting together. The Indian is gregarious; all are related or semi-related to each other and, like other people, crave periodical reunions. The point might also be raised—though it would stand small chance of being

listened to—that such deterrent action meant interference with the Indians' religious worship.

Whenever a few Indians met together, either for council or celebration, some form of invocation was always gone through. The big pipe would be filled, lighted and handed to the oldest man in the circle. He would say a few words, take a puff or two, and point the stem of the pipe up, and down, then to the four points of the compass, before it was passed round for each to smoke in turn. If they met together to feast, some selected person first threw a portion of the meat into the fire in the middle of the gathering. But, though on such occasions—and on others—some short religious rite is observed, yet religion is not the object of the gathering.

The strictly religious ceremonies of the Crees are three. Of these, the Thirst Dance comes first, as being on a larger scale, and of more general observance. The other two are the Smoking Tent and the Open-end Tent. This latter is the Indian Feast of All Souls. Remark has been made of the custom of every family keeping what is called "The Burden"—relics of the lost ones, wrapped in a bundle and enclosed in red or other colored stroud, the best they can afford. When a household loses one of its members by death, everything belonging to the deceased is given away. Sometimes the family's whole belongings are got rid of. This is to get out of sight all the articles in everyday use which remind the bereaved of the lost ones. But some small memento is preserved and treasured and the accumulation of these form the Burden. It falls to the lot of the woman to take care of this, and it is faithfully carried round whenever she has a journey or camp is moved.

THE OPEN-END TENT—

The ceremony of the Open-end Tent, is, at the same time, a sacrifice, a feast, and a dance—a mournful dance. Here, again, it seems to fall naturally within the province of female activity to take the lead in performing this annual memorial ceremony, but she must be one in communion with the Spirits, and she must be old. The tent is made each fall in every Indian village. It is a long, narrow structure of small poles shaped like the roof of a house and covered with tents lent for the occasion. It is open at the south end—hence its name. Anyone who wishes, that is, all those interested in the tribute to the memory of the dead—lends a hand in the making.

The women all go provided with a kettle-full of food and also take along the "Burden". She who initiates the ceremony sits at the far end of the tent with a small fire before her. The

kettles are deposited round the fire and the burdens given over to her by the women as they arrive. These she hangs up. Women line one side of the tent, men the other, while young people crawl in under the flaps of the sides, and crouch informally behind.

The priestess, when all have arrived, makes a prayer to the Spirits and her Familiar, burns a wisp of sweet-grass and throws a little food on the fire as a sacrifice. Then the feast begins. Everyone has a dish of some kind and into these the food is ladled from the kettles by a server going along the lines. A hash of meat and saskatoon berries is the favorite dish on this occasion but anything eatable will do. All has to be eaten up clean: nothing must be left over; and here is where the young ones nestled down behind come in. These clean up the fragments, for as the elderly participants become satiated, the platters are passed behind to run the gauntlet of the younger and keener appetite.

It is quite a silent feast, outside of the necessary noise of eating and clattering dishes. After the feeding is done—that is when nobody can eat any more, the priestess rises to her feet, and starts a wail. All follow and dance slowly down and back, with heads shrouded, lamenting and weeping. The burdens are selected when reached in the course of the promenade, and nursed in the arms of the dancers, as they go round and round. The priestess intones a song, a melancholy one, and all take up the dirge as they go solemnly round and round the long enclosure. They stop, sit down for a while, until some one else begins a tune, when all rise and dance as before. This is repeated till the approach of morning, when everybody goes home refreshed in spirit, and the ceremony is concluded for that year. There is no particular dress attached to this observance, indeed, no attempt at adornment: the idea is to attend with a kettle of food, a bundle of relics, and a mournful appearance. The food that is thrown on the fire is fed to the spirits of the departed. The wailing on these occasions has reached the standard of an art and is most horrible to listen to.

THE SMOKING TENT—

The most serious of all the Indian observances, in fact the only one conducted without any foolery or skylarking of the younger and lighter-minded of the community, is the Smoking Tent. Only the serious and mature are allowed to participate, and only males. It is of annual observance—in the early fall—and, strange to say, is not a dance.

Only certain men will take the responsibility of conducting this ceremony. The lodge is made large enough to take three or four ordinary tents to cover it in; it is made in round form, and open to the east. A sufficient quantity of food is prepared, including a supply of grease of some fluid kind. Those who take part, daub their heads with white clay, in imitation of grey hair, but in no other respect does their appearance indicate any special preparation.

When the appointed time comes, all participants repair to the tent, in the middle of which a fire has been lighted, and seat themselves round in a circle. The "maker" of the tent has taken his place at the far side, with his long-stemmed pipe and the kettles of food in evidence. No drum is used in this performance, the rattle taking its place, thus giving a character of gravity to the proceedings which would indicate an incantation, rather than a ceremonial. The assemblage being seated, and everything ready, the pipe is charged with modified tobacco or the best substitute, and reverently lighted. Every move is weighted with the utmost gravity. The "maker" takes a whiff or two, and then carefully lays the stem to the cardinal points of the compass, then up, then down. After another whiff or two, the pipe is now deliberately handed round, for each man, in turn, to take a few draws thus travelling till it comes back to the man who is officiating. The "maker" now lays the pipe aside and takes a portion of the food and grease which, before the kettles are handed round, he throws on the live coals as an offering. Then, each, in turn helps himself from the kettles, which go the round for that purpose. For some time all are absorbed in eating. Very, very gravely the whole proceedings are gone through, hardly a word being spoken.

After the feast, comes the singing: the rattle is jingled in quick time by the "Tent-maker" as he starts his song, and all join in. Then the rattle passes to the next in line who begins a song of his own, and again all take part. So, the rattle goes the round, each holder leading in song—often his own composition—with the rest of the company coming in as chorus. There are no words to these songs, merely tunes, and only the tunes peculiar to this ceremony. At intervals, the pipe is charged and lighted and goes the round, when the music begins again. The sitting continues all night with sedate singing and smoking, the devotees departing at dawn and going off gravely to their own separate tents.

The ceremony is one of oblation. The best in food that the community can afford is thrown on the fire as an offer-

ing, and the pipe is turned in every possible direction, for the use of all possible spirits, as each person has his own particular guardian and guide.

THE VIGIL—

This custom of the Indian, though scarcely a religious ceremony, was certainly one in which the spiritual influences which all the world regards as co-efficients of religion were sought in fasting and meditation. Therefore, every Indian with a son to whom he wished to give all possible advantages, would want him to essay the "Vigil".

As a preparation for this, such a father loses no opportunity of impressing the objects of Indian ambition on the growing intelligence; kindness and hospitality in the camp, bravery in the face of the enemy, honesty, truth and reliability have been inculcated; while greed, meanness, lying, stealing, and especially truculence among friends have been decried. Thus trained, on arriving at man's estate, the youth is further prepared by advice and encouragement for the severe trial he is about to undergo; and, some night, the father and son steal away from the tent, and repair to a chosen, desolate spot, where the youth is left to fast for ten days and nights, alone.

No Indian can be truly great and famous, except he be assisted from the Unseen World, and the object of the "Vigil" was to give the spirits a chance to communicate with the aspirant to fame, while the body was chastened by hunger and thirst and solitude. If successful, he would be taught songs by which ever Familiar attached itself to him and, by that Familiar, he would be guided and shielded through life. He would be instructed how to summon this Familiar when need pressed. For this help, some service would be required of him, but rather in the way of homage, than of a burdensome nature. He must never stick a knife in the ground; he must never cross a swamp; he must sacrifice a certain part of every animal he killed in the hunt; or he must always wear some particular article, or he must never wear it. As the consequence of this, one man never takes off his head-cover; another never wears anything between his moccasins and his feet, and so on. These were the terms on which he would be helped, and dire were the consequences of disregard or carelessness in performing his part of the contract.

When complaint was made to the Indian of the want of any outward and visible signs of this inward and spiritual grace, in those who had undergone this trial, he would refer to accomplishments in old times and deplore that the attributes

of his race are gradually slipping away as the result of the contaminating influence of the white man.

THE SCALP DANCE—

While on the subject of Indian customs, it would be a serious omission to say nothing about the Scalp Dance. The life of the Indians of the plains of the North-West, before the white man established law and order in the country, was one of constant danger: of ambuscade, butchery and reprisal; so that it is small wonder that the spirit of ferocity was inculcated by every habit and custom, and fostered by each peril encountered and circumvented; that the routine of Indian life was one continuous incentive to make the desire for renown in war as consuming as possible; and that every appeal to the Powers Unknown was for victory—for life rather than for daily bread.

In this order of things the Scalp Dance was a prime factor. The hair of a dead enemy was the first thing taken, indeed it was not necessary that the enemy be dead, so long as he was unable to resist the mutilation. Many even survived it. A cut was made round the head, just above the eyebrows and ears, and the skin torn off with the teeth. This operation was often performed hurriedly and imperfectly, in which case the next man came in for the remainder, and one head might furnish several scalps. Even a small portion was cherished. A willow was bent into circular form and tied; the flesh side of the scalp was then cleaned and the trophy stretched inside this willow form by string through holes in the edges. The whole thing was, for the time being, hung to the end of a stick, five or six feet long, which served for the purpose of display when used as a walking stick. There the scalp dried and dangled.

Suppose the return of a party, successful in a foray, with one or more scalps. They would halt some distance from, but out of sight of the camp, and paint themselves on all exposed parts with a compound of grease, lead and charcoal—the lead triturated, as it were, by the greased hands; the result, with a little charcoal added, is rubbed on the body, and the process repeated, *ad lib.* Thus adorned, they commence their ceremonious entrance into the camp. As heroes of the hour the happy owners of scalps march in the middle front, bearing their trophies. The others act as chorus, singing the correct songs—tunes, that is, with words to suit the occasion, and naming the successful warrior. When the attention of the camp was attracted, all would rush forward towards the adventurers to hear the good news. The custom was to rifle the tents of those who brought home scalps—probably with the idea that they

were so transported with joy as not to notice the depredation. This was the next step, and all hastened to take what they could lay their hands on; and, to such an extent was this license allowed, that a brave returned from war often was obliged to seek shelter and food in some one else's lodge. It paid a man better to devote his talents and audacity to horse-stealing, rather than to the acquisition of scalps, and yet this latter was infinitely more desired. Then, to the dance.

It is a day dance, and only women take part in it. Their faces and hands are blackened, like those of the men. No drum is used, and the songs are peculiar to the dance. All join in the tune and some one is inspired to set words that suit the occasion. In this recitative the name of the hero and his great deeds are extravagantly sung, with the chorus coming in at the end of each sentence. The whole performance is sweet to the men, who stand mute objects of admiration. The scalp wands are snatched from each other by the dancers, who progress round and round in time with the tune. At intervals, one virago or another pours forth fiendish sentiments in staccato song. Eventually, both sentiments and fury are exhausted and the party separates to meet again at night.

Now, men as well as women participate, and the drum is used. The tunes are of the same kind. All sit round, the sexes on opposite sides. The drum is started, a tune begun, and one after another rises and, keeping time, promenades slowly around inside the circle, till the singing ceases, when the dancers suddenly stop and hurry to their places. This goes on till they all get tired.

The distinctive feature of the Scalp Dance appears to be the black paint, that is, apart from the tunes used. These, indeed, mark a difference where otherwise none appears in all the ceremonies and amusements of the Indian. The dress tells little or nothing, for it is a feature more or less beyond control; discipline and routine are merely rudimentary and, like dress, vary within wide limits with the whim of the individual; but the song speaks unmistakably. Let an Indian hear a tune and he knows at once the class to which it belongs. It may be remarked here that Indian songs, which present such a sameness and want of melody to the white man's ear, are not nearly so harsh and monotonous when one gets accustomed to hearing them. There are many distinct types, and many of each type, with just as much variety as songs generally present.

"MATH-TAH-HIT-TOO-WIN"—

Another semi-religious ceremony of the Indian that takes

dancing as a mode of expression is the "Math-tah-hit-too-win", a word that is untranslatable. The nearest that can be got to it is "Passing off something to each other". The man who is competent to make this dance, must be an adept at all weather practice and familiar, through his visions, with the little demons called "Pah-gah-koo-suk". These are understood to be ghosts of a mischievous type, surprising people in the scrub, apparently with the sole object of frightening them. They are not given to showing themselves but manifest their presence by whistling; they are, however, described as small skeletons and they inhabit bushy places. Indians wandering around at night exhibit an almost childish fear of these little goblins on account of the misfortune they can bring and it is to propitiate them that the ceremony is observed. "Give away", it is often called.

A large, round tent, taking two or three teepee-covers to roof it in, is made, the doorway large, and open to the north, with a rude carving of a human figure, cut in green poplar, on each side of it. Outside, at the cardinal points of the compass, are four poplar sticks stuck in the ground. Each of those who attend brings a big dish or kettle and a spoon. At the far end of the tent, opposite the door, sits the convenor of the meeting with a little fire in front of him and by his side, a bladder of fat, and his magic rattle. This rattle—very important in Indian ceremonial—is made of thin raw-hide, scraped to consistency, shaped while green, but now hard and dry, with two or three pieces of metal inside it and tied to a light handle six or eight inches long. The drum is not used in this dance. Four of the male guests are now deputed to go outside with loaded guns, each, at the signal of the rattle, to fire at one of the four posts. When all is ready, the maker begins to sing and suddenly brings the rattle into play, when four reports outside are heard and the whole crowd bursts into song. When the tune comes to an end, the rattle is passed on to the next man in the row who then sings his song. So the rattle goes the round of the circle, skipping the women on its way, till it comes back to its owner. Next, some men take kettles of food and therefrom ladle the contents out into the dishes of the company, who greedily devour it. All this is merely preliminary. The serious part of the ceremony begins with the rising of the priest, of the cult and the man opposite him. The former takes the bladder of fat, bites a piece out and spits it on the fire as an offering to the "ghosts", then waves it backward and forward with both hands, feigning to throw it to the other, who stands ready to catch. Finally it is thrown, and caught—sel-

dom missed—the catcher repeating over and over, “I catch such and such a thing on the fly”—naming whatever he is most in need of; as, for instance, “I catch long life on the fly,” or “I catch health for my daughter”, or “I catch a good hunt”. The bladder is then thrown back to the first man, who repeats the formula according to his needs. So, it is thrown backward and forward along the lines to the end.

Now begins the “Math-tah-hit-too-win”. Any person in the community may, of malice aforethought, go up to another, sing an appropriate tune, dance up and down a little by bending the knees and finish by saying, “I bestow such and such a thing on thee”. It is not possible to refuse the gift, and it is then incumbent for the recipient to dance off to somebody else, something of equal value. This is to even up the transaction by passing on the onus incurred by the acquisition, because it is supposed that any balance between receipts and disbursements is made up at the expense of the receiver's luck. So most people try to give as much as they receive, in case the difference is taken out of them by fate.

For four nights this goes on, and property changes hands briskly, passing from one person to another. The tent is full of people all the time and the originator spends all his time there: but it is not absolutely necessary to go there to dance off property. Any person, casually encountered, may have something “danced on” to him; which, or its value, he forthwith seeks an opportunity of “dancing off” to someone else. By request, one more night may be added to the time during which a chance is given for “doing” an acquaintance out of health or good fortune, at the expense of mere worldly possessions.

The sharp ones often dance off balky horses, or things they are tired of, in the hope of bettering themselves by the return gift; while the young and thoughtless have a general good time during the continuance of the dance.

This observance was one of the first that was stopped by the Indian Department, as increasing the poverty of a people who could hardly be poorer, but, inasmuch as what one gave, another got and the aggregate of possessions remained the same, the reason would not appear to be a very good one.

POUNDS.—

While on the subject of the characteristic customs of the Cree Indians, it may not be without interest to dwell shortly on pounds. The poundmaker was in a class by himself. He was

a professional. By virtue of the teaching of his familiar, he could guide the buffalo in any direction he pleased. The spirits of the buffalo communed with him in his dreams, and were at his command when he needed them. In no other way can the unsophisticated Indian explain the facility with which a herd of buffalo was seduced to its destruction. The co-operation of ordinary individuals was, however, necessary—also a favorable location. The bush must be handy and the lie of the land suitable. Season mattered not; either summer or winter would do. The Master's aid must be sought and nominally compensated—this in conformity with the invariable practice of those privileged with superhuman power.

For the pound, a down grade was best, but not imperative. At the lower end a circular fence of brush was made, several feet thick, and eight feet high, thirty or so yards in diameter. Occasionally, two fences were made, one opening into the other. The opening or entrance, was about ten feet wide and floored with sticks—that is trees of a few inches in diameter. This platform was sloped gradually up to the top of the fenced enclosure, while the descent into the pound was abrupt, so that the buffalo, in their frenzied rush, would tumble in but would be obliged to climb out. A lane, with brush fences on each side and leading up to the gate, was made outside the enclosure. This was so designed, that a sharp turn near the pound hid from the frightened animals the trap that was prepared for them. This was a critical point and the fences were strongly built. From here, outwards, for a long distance, the lane gradually grew wider apart till, eventually, isolated bunches of brush, behind which a person might hide took the place of the fences.

Indians who could be relied on to bring the buffalo within the range of the hidden beaters were few. Many tried it; some could do it occasionally. Wonderful tales are told of this or that man who could make the buffalo follow a song to their destruction, but they are generally too wonderful for belief. So it would appear that the successful poundmaker was an Indian observant enough to acquire an intimate knowledge of the habits of the buffalo and at the same time sufficiently shrewd to put his familiarity to use. Halfbreed hunters say that the animals were possessed with the idea that they were being headed off, if a horseman got close up to them, and that they would persistently try to forge round the front; in which case, of course, they might be herded in any direction by a rider with a horse fast enough. Once decoyed past the outlying brush, the task is comparatively easy. An Indian jumps

up from his hiding place, waves his blanket and the herd shies off to the other side cannoning, as it were, from one side to the other, till they enter the brush lane. They are scared into hurrying on and the further they get the more incessant becomes the hue-and-cry, till their efforts to escape assume the proportions of a stampede. Behind the brush lanes too, people are stationed to prevent the frightened animals from breaking through the fences and to shoo them into the pound. Over the inclined threshold into the enclosure they go. A dancing crowd of Indians with waving blankets and shouts, blocks the entrance way, and the frantic herd mills round and round until shot down by the hungry foes that encompass them. Dead and dying are pitted together in a writhing mass, till the knife ends the butchery.

Then all hands bend to the task before them. Flaying is done as best it may since the floor is too crowded for scientific work but the hides are stripped off; tid-bits of raw liver, fat, and kidney assuage the immediate pangs of hunger, while the meat is being stripped from the bones for the orgies of feeding that last till plenty becomes scarcity again. But, after all, there is a limit to even an Indian's capacity and, once their well-developed appetites are thoroughly satisfied, the crowd settles down to drying the meat and sinews; extracting marrow; stretching hides for leather; and perhaps preparing pemmican for either winter use or sale at the trading post.

In general, it may be said that this method of hunting the buffalo—if it can be called hunting—was resorted to but seldom. Success depended upon too many circumstances. The ground must lie correctly; timber should be available; the game has to be fairly plentiful and within easy reach. Also, some one able to guide the animals in the right direction was indispensable. Under the most favorable conditions, too, the herd often escaped. They might stampede through the confining lines of Indians. They might with their great weight and momentum crash through the encircling walls of the pound. But, when it did succeed, it was a great accomplishment.

I have been at great pains to make all possible enquiries regarding the danger from stampeding herds of buffalo, but could never find any experienced hunter who believed such a thing to be possible. All agreed that, no matter how large the herd, nor how badly frightened they might be, they were easy to turn from their course, and all expressed the opinion that stories of travellers—in large or small parties—being wiped out of existence by stampeding herds of buffalo were products of the imagination. In running the buffalo there was the chance

that the animal, goaded into desperation, might turn on its tormentor and gore either the horse or its rider, but all regarded the "stampede" as a joke. Yet, the country, on occasion, was literally black with buffalo as far as the eye could reach.

THE INDIAN AS A WARRIOR—

It is the common opinion that the Indian is a coward, he will not fight fair. Instead of coming out in the open, like a man, he sneaks behind trees and bushes or what not till he gets a safe and easy chance at his opponent. The Indian, in conflict with the white man, pits his experience and his inherited system of tactics against the superior arms and the discipline of his opponent. To ask the Indian to stand out in the open to be shot down before he got within range of his own weapons, would be as absurd as to demand that his adversary arm himself with bow and arrows and butcher knives and that the white man take not the advantage of his superior numbers. Under all circumstances, the imputation of cowardice comes with small grace from the powerful against the weak, from the aggressor against the savage defender of his life and liberty, who asks only to be allowed to exist and to be let alone. But the Indian is not by any means a coward, on the contrary, he is heir to whatever intrepidity is natural to the human race and in him, the gift has not faded out for want of use, but has been nourished and trained by his mode of life, and the circumstances by which he finds himself surrounded. He is, in consequence, hardy, patient and resolute, and his experiences have not brought out much to engender either love of life or fear of death. Many instances might be adduced in support of this estimate, but one must suffice: it is a true story, and a good illustration of the Indian character. It is the

STORY OF ALMIGHTY VOICE—

"Almighty Voice" was a Saulteaux, born and brought up in the Settlements. So close, indeed was he to civilisation, that he had spent most of his youthful days round a N.W.M. Police post, and had quite a smattering of English. He used to wash dishes and run errands: in return, he got his food, and scraps of all kinds to take home. Naturally, there sprung up quite a familiarity, if not a positively friendly feeling between members of the detachment and himself. Eventually, he grew up, married and settled down on a Reserve near Duck Lake. At this period, the Indian Department had a scheme by which cows were loaned to the Indians, as a basis from which they might raise stock for themselves. The original stock was to be returned to the department, when the borrower's herd warranted it.

This expedient, theoretically good, and prompted by the right spirit, proved a constant source of friction owing to the unbending system of control required by red tape in the hands of insensitive agents. "Almighty Voice" had cattle, the issue of such loan. His wife fell sick. To the Indian, meat is the only nourishing food, and he had no meat to feed her. So, in accordance with the rules, he asked permission of the agent to slaughter one of his own animals. The agent, more interested in preserving the cattle than in the welfare of the Indians, refused that permission. Strict account of cattle was demanded of the agent, whereas the death of an Indian would be reverently regarded as a manifestation of the inscrutable designs of Providence. Notwithstanding this refusal, "Almighty Voice", who regarded the animal as his own, and the request for permission to kill as a mere matter of form, killed the animal. The agent immediately had him arrested. He was taken to the detachment quarters, unshackled in any way by the police, who knew him well, and anticipated no trouble. But their confidence was misplaced, for he walked outside to freedom while the police were engaged in their usual avocations. He went home, got his gun, and disappeared from the white man's view, though he did not go far away. For some time he kept in close touch with his sick wife, if, indeed he did not stay altogether with her. But the chase soon got too hot and he had to take to the wild. His whereabouts leaked out, and a sergeant—who knew him well—with an interpreter, went to arrest him. They came upon him, but, while they were still at some distance, he levelled his gun at them, and told them not to come any nearer, or he would shoot. The sergeant, depending on the intimacy existing between them, tried to talk him into submission, but "Almighty Voice" said he was determined not to allow himself to be arrested, and would listen to no blandishments. Still persuading himself that this was all bluff—though the interpreter thought differently—and that there was no danger, the policeman continued his advance. "Almighty Voice" shot him dead. The interpreter ran away.

There was now a hue-and-cry after the murderer, but the police could never get on his track, and eventually it was the general opinion that he had skipped across the Line. But he never went far from home. The Indians would not betray him and he took good care not to show himself where he might be identified. His friends, it appears, tried to get him to leave the country but he would not. Two years elapsed, till hope of arresting him had almost vanished, when he was recognised by a Halfbreed, and the hunt became warm again. During this

hunt, he killed one man and wounded another, but he was now so hard pressed that he finally took shelter in a fair sized clump of poplar trees—what, in this country, is called a “bluff”. Here, at last, he was driven to earth. He had evidently prepared for his last fight, for he had dug a pit in the centre of the bluff and cut roads thence to the edges. Individual attempts at ousting him failed through the death of those adventuring. Finally, the bluff was surrounded, and the outlaw besieged by about two hundred men, including a large force of police with guns. For about ten days he stood them off, occasionally killing one of the more enterprising of his enemies, while the bluff was pounded to pieces by shelling. When they at last took him, he was dead. His last meal had apparently been a crow; and with his last cartridge he had blown the top of his head off. The whole affair reeked with mismanagement from beginning to end; the only outstanding point is the indomitable resolution of the Indian. How many he had killed in his conflict with the law, I do not remember—six or seven, perhaps more.

He could easily have escaped across the Line or to the pathless woods, north or east: that course, it was said was urged on him by his relatives: but he was determined to fight it out at home. Many other instances might be adduced—without citing any in which all the actors were Indians, and which might therefore be regarded as apochryphal—but, where such appear necessary, they would not convince. The Indian is patient, enduring and resolute. He is brave.

I have been repeatedly told by old fighters that Indians were not brave at all times and under all circumstances, but only when they made up their mind to it. They would not always seek danger. Even young men, who had a name to make, chose their occasion. Yet, when danger sought them out, all would make a desperate fight. As instancing their wonderful resolution, it is not inapt to point to the fact that every one of the murderers during the Rebellion voluntarily gave himself up, though they knew to what they were resigning themselves. They all came singing to the scaffold and met death with seeming unconcern.

Again, the Indian is cruel. So he is—to his enemies; to those from whom he asks no mercy, he gives none. Yet he is cruel only in an inefficient, savage way. He is behind the rest of the world a thousand years, while of the refinements of cruelty, as practised by civilised nations in their wars, he is hopelessly ignorant. Without doubt, they are cruel, but who

shall denounce them? Surely not the exponents of the boot, the rack, and the stake; of bombs, of poison gas and blockades.

We have read and heard a great deal of the Red Man's cruelty, yet he adopted most of his prisoners. In all the tribes of the prairie may be found strangers, living assimilated, and quite content amongst their hereditary enemies. While on the subject of fighting, and also because the tale has a local interest, it occurs naturally to relate the Indian account of the

FIRST BATTLE OF CUT KNIFE—

Quite a long time ago, yet still within the knowledge of many still living, buffalo were plentiful, and a large number of Crees had gathered for their summer hunt on the prairie to the south. Their camp was situated on the south side of Battle River just within that debatable ground, for the quiet enjoyment of which the Crees and Stonies, as allies, had for generations contended—and were still contending—against the Southern Confederacy. This spot had been named as the gathering place, and the camp would remain there till the concourse of Indians was great enough to warrant them in boldly launching out into the midst of their enemies. Meanwhile, they maintained themselves as best they could and gave themselves up to amusement with the zest that comes only to those whose lives are for the most part spent in solitary places.

Arrangements for the coming hunt were already in progress; a head man had been appointed and a band of soldiers.

The land on the south side of Battle River stretches level for a few miles, till it meets the escarpment of the prairie plateau. Here the rise is in most places very steep, and covered more or less with thick brush, but, coulees break the sharp edge of the hills at frequent intervals, and afford easy means of communication between the two levels.

The Cut Knife Hill is an eminence rising from the upper plateau, and dominating the country for miles around. One side descends abruptly to the edge of the creek which, far down below, winds its way towards the Battle River. Bush marks the course of this little waterway, and, at this point, extends over the whole face of the hill, which here has a north-east exposure. The summit is level, covered with low shrubs, and about fifty feet in circumference, the ground falling away very gradually towards the prairie—on that side as even as a floor, and bounded by the sky.

Meat was getting scarce in the camp, and, as buffalo were known to be within a short distance, a hunt on regular, organised lines was projected. Every preparation having been made the night before, two young men were sent off ahead of the main body of the hunters, very early in the morning, to ascertain exactly the whereabouts of the game. They expected to have some distance to go and started so as to reach the place where they thought to find the buffalo by dawn. As the crow flies, travels the Indian, for he goes light, and instinct seems to guide him; the straight way, moreover is the shortest. Rise after rise would be ridden up, and the country surveyed from that vantage point, but the search had taken them a considerable distance east, when the quarry was at last espied grazing unsuspectingly at a distance. Then—back to camp the nearest way. This took them over the level ground to the west of Cut Knife and, as they neared the edge of the plateau from which the tents would be visible, they skirted the foot of the hill that commands the view for leagues. Prompted by fate they decided to climb it. They would take advantage of the elevation in looking out for the hunters, and in signalling to them the direction to be taken.

They slowly walked their horses up the rise. When their eyes came to the level of the top, there burst on their view the figure of a man lying on his belly in the short brush. He held a spyglass to his eye and was too much absorbed in contemplation of the distant encampment, and the approaching hunters to notice the tread of the ponies behind and the danger that consequently menaced his rear. The instant they saw him, unseen, they instinctively glided from their saddles and, flinging themselves on the ground, silently crawled towards their unconscious enemy. Slowly, noiselessly they stole up, but, just as they were about to throw themselves on him and bury their knives in his breast, he turned his head and his eyes met theirs. Quickly they sprang at him, but he leaped lightly down the declivity and was lost to sight in the bushes that clothed that side of the hill, from the top till the creek laves its base.

From where they stood, the approaching party of hunters was visible, slowly riding along. These, probably, it was that had absorbed the spy's attention. A shot or two attracted their notice to the excited young men who trailed their blankets to and fro to summon help and in less time than it takes to tell it, a hundred mounted warriors were keeping up a running fight with a war-party of Sarcées, thus accidentally discovered. The enemy hastily fled to the inviting shelter of the thickets

that fringed the creek. From here they easily held their opponents at bay and hoped to make their escape when darkness should come to hide their movements.

By this time the whole allied camp of Crees and Stonies was on the spot and pandemonium reigned. Women shrieked like Furies, calling on the men to rush on the enemy and overwhelm them; men kept shouting their war-cry, shrill and eerie, and firing their guns; dogs were barking and howling—all at a safe distance. The hunted were scooping out shallow pits, near together, each to hide two or three men, to enable them the better to resist attacks till the coming of night and, if the worst came, prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

The hunters crept up as close as they could on all sides and each party potted at the other from time to time, without much harm being done, practically marking time till either could perceive some advantage. So it went on all day. In the afternoon the Crees took counsel together. The pits must be taken by storm. But, it was almost evening and they might hurt their own men if the charge were made in the dark. Under cover of darkness again, the enemy might escape. So, watch-fires were lighted, all round, and men lay hidden within close distance of each other, in a circle, guarding the enemy. Thus, they waited for dawn, when the attack was to be made. One of the Sarcees was killed, trying to crawl off along a deep buffalo path, but the path led in the wrong direction and he was seen and shot. Once in a while a Cree would sneak up as near as he thought safe, to listen to the enemy's conversation, suddenly springing up, and zig-zagging his flight back into the darkness. All night, a fire of taunts was kept up by both sides. "I am Short-knife. I have eaten many Crees. I think I have more to eat yet." And, then from the other side,—“Don't sleep! Namesakes! Tomorrow you will sleep soundly”. “Are ye women, that ye have to be so pressed to come?” “We will send word home how ye died.” And so on. Individual Crees stole noiselessly up as near as they might to the enemy's lair to try their luck but crawled as silently back without result. Several of the Sarcees crept, under cover of the darkness, through the unordered lines of their foes to liberty, but, with these exceptions, and some promiscuous shooting, the night passed uneventfully.

As soon as it was light enough to distinguish friend from foe, the Crees started their cautious approach on all sides. No firearms were to be used; nothing but the knife, the spear, and the hammer. Those in the pits would jump up suddenly, and

fire off their guns; but these were random shots, for picked men on the other side were watching to fire at any who exposed themselves and prevented careful aim. Of a sudden, the air was rent with shouts, to which the Sarcees responded with the war-whoop—"Now, Now!" . . . "Rush on! Rush on!", and a multitude of men darted out of the cover of the bushes, ran forward, with jumps from one side to the other to avoid careful aim, and precipitated themselves on the pits. Blankets were pitched in first—open, to blind the enemy and confuse them, then the men themselves followed. There was a brief hand-to-hand fight, while friend and foe were mixed in one writhing mass, but resistance soon ceased, and the bloody remains of thirty Sarcees silently testified to the valor and ferocity of their enemies. Of course, when the fighting finished, the women had to come and wreak their vengeance on the dead, by mangling the bodies till very little was left.

So, like a warrior, died "Short-knife", but his name is perpetuated in a hill and a district, that will outlive the memory of the bloody event that baptised them.

It is not to be understood that this summary of the Indian character and customs was all gained in the six years of my residence on Red Pheasant's Reserve; it is the condensed experience of my whole forty years of close touch with the natives, and an intimate acquaintance with their language; but I have considered it more convenient to put all on record here, at the present stage, rather than to relate it without continuity and at fortuitous intervals throughout the narrative

PERIOD OF AGITATION AND CONFLICT—

The Reserves—Poundmaker and His Reserve—Big Bear—The Crisis of 1884—The Origin of the 1885 Rebellion—The Rebellion Breaks Out—The So-Called Siege of Battleford—In Danger on the Reserve—Emissaries From Riel—The Battle of Cut Knife—The Start for Duck Lake—The Collapse of the Rebellion—Poundmaker's Surrender—The Frog Massacre—The Trials at Regina—After the Rebellion.

RESERVES—

My six years on Red Pheasant's Reserve had seen little change in the country. It had been expected that, once the tribes had signed the treaty, and ceased their interminable feuds, the prairies of the West would quickly fill up with settlers whose example would instruct the natives in their novel agricultural venture, who would help to solve the Indian Department's difficulties by affording work to the Indians, and whose presence would bring cumulative safety to those whites who had so long lived on sufferance in the country.

But, settlers, had not come in. Except for the railway through the south there had been no increased means of communication. Mail came in from Swift Current, three hundred miles, instead of from Winnipeg, six hundred miles. There might be a score of venturesome men squatted at widely separated points through the district; a few Halfbreeds from Red River, fleeing from civilisation, had settled here and there—at Prince Albert, at Duck Lake, at Bresaylor; but these additions to the population meant only added insecurity and responsibility. The Indian was still paramount but was not fully aware of it. Battleford was still a post of the Mounted Police, the headquarters of a division, the purveying for whom furnished the means of living to the few freighters and farmers located in the vicinity. The seat of government had been moved to Regina and all the advantages the town had confidently expected from that connection had vanished. Apart from the Indian Department and the police, there was no work. There were no settlers because there was no railway and no market. There was no money. What little the farmers brought in was traded for goods at the store.

The town—if that be not too grandiloquent a term—had started to move across the Battle River to the large flat opposite, a most magnificent site, but, by reason of having a river on each side, difficult of approach for a railway. The stores set the example of migrating but, such a state of stagnation existed, that only the carefully nursed hope of a railway in the near future kept the place from being deserted. The only English heard was in the town; elsewhere, it was Cree or French. With Cr  , you could go anywhere, for all the Halfbreeds spoke it, while few understood English; with English alone, one's itinerary would be uncomfortably circumscribed.

Indian ponies were cheap and horseback was the usual means of travelling. These ponies, that did not know what oats were could travel sixty miles a day for a week, on grass. They were wonderfully tough and a few, when trained, developed considerable speed; racing, therefore, was a constant diversion.

About 1882 buffalo began to get too scarce to be depended on for food—even to those who gave up all their time to hunting, so, one by one, the tribes of Crees whose discontent with the treaty terms had sent them out into the south country after buffalo, rather than accept life as they saw it on Reserves, found, with the disappearance of their natural prey and the consequent temptation—if not necessity—of killing cattle for food, that every man's hand was against them and the country too hot to hold them. So they gradually drifted or allowed themselves to be herded back up north, where they were placed on lands that had been severally allotted them.

POUNDMAKER AND HIS RESERVE—

One of the first chiefs of importance to give in, was Poundmaker. At the signing of the treaty, he had been what is called a councillor, or head man under a chief but, as a discontent and the mouthpiece of those that held out for better terms, he had accumulated a large following of bold, truculent fellows, mostly young men. After the first Reserves had got settled down to work Poundmaker came up north to see for himself how the government's scheme for transforming the hunter into an agriculturist was working and how the Indians fared in their new circumstances. He saw nothing very encouraging and departed again in disgust. But the net was closing round them in the south and the following year he and his band reluctantly came home. The outlook here, little as they liked it,

was preferable to the lawlessness of the boundary country, where the worst elements of all the North-West tribes strove with the white hunter and with each other for a precarious existence.

Up to this time Poundmaker had never distinguished himself as a warrior but had acquired what reputation he possessed from his ability as a negotiator. He had been adopted by the Blackfoot Chief "Crowfoot" as a son and, with the standing accompanying this position, had many times performed the part of negotiator and patched up many differences between Blackfeet and Crees. He called himself a peacemaker.

Little Pine, a warrior of great note, brought in his band shortly after Poundmaker and, with Luckyman as neighbour, chose for his Reserve, land adjoining Poundmaker's. Poundmaker was at this time about forty years of age, tall and good looking, slightly built and with an intelligent face, in which a large Roman nose was prominent; his bearing was so eminently dignified and his speech so well adapted to the occasion, as to impress every hearer with his earnestness and his views. Indeed, for the time being, I believe he impressed himself.

He convinced the officials of the Department of Indian Affairs that the Indian could not work with insufficient food; nor could they become successful farmers and earn a living without tools and stock. On the other side, he was quite prepared—indeed glad to consent that those who would not work should not eat.

Poundmaker's Reserve, along with Little Pine's and Luckyman's, stretched contiguously along the Battle River, about forty miles above the town; another Reserve—that of Sweet Grass—was halfway between the two. Battle River is a small stream winding about in a valley of varying width, nearly parallel with the lordly Saskatchewan which it joins just below Battleford. The Battle can be forded at many points during normal stages of water, the other is a river a mile wide, here and there channelled by islands, difficult of navigation by reason of shifting sandbars and with a bottom of quicksand that almost precludes fording. Cut Knife Creek runs through Poundmaker's Reserve from the south to join Battle River, and historic "Cut Knife Hill" rears its head above the surrounding country from the middle of the Reserve. This hill, which gives its name to the district surrounding, is named after a Sarcee chief, who, there, with a few followers, paid the extreme pen-

alty of temerity in the usual Indian way. The term is an adaptation from the Indian, who has divided his country in his own way, and who has specialised localities for his own guidance, and for his own satisfaction. He calls this hill—"Kees-kee-ko-man oot us-ow-wap-ee-win" approximately "Short-knife's Look-out." A short account of this fight has already been given.

The advent of the Indians from the south, who had witnessed the comparative liberality with which the Americans treated the natives and had their ideas enlarged by the spectacle, combined with the representations of Poundmaker, started things moving in the Indian Department. A few more oxen were given out among the different bands, with plows, harrows, and various small hand tools. Rationing on a more liberal scale was also begun; a pound of flour and a quarter of a pound of bacon per head per day was issued out to those who "worked". Everything else besides these two staples—tea, tobacco, sugar, clothes—these trifles they had to "rustle" for themselves.

At this stage of affairs, I had been teaching school on Red Pheasant's Reserve for about six years and, for various reasons was dissatisfied with things generally. I therefore wished to find some change of employment and applied to the Indian Agent for a position as instructor. This term was applied to the resident representative of the department on the Reserve, taking orders from the agent—who lived in town—and carrying those orders out as nearly as circumstances and the temper of the Indians permitted. The instructor had to bring results and adapt his means to the peculiarities of both sides; he had also to bear the brunt of any ill-feeling engendered in the performance.

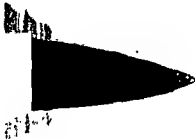
On the strength of my eight years' experience in the country and my knowledge of the Indians and their language, I received the appointment and was sent to Poundmaker's Reserve where there was a vacancy. The department had experienced some difficulty in managing these Indians who were "kickers" and defiant in their contumacy. My predecessor on the job had been there but a short time, and had given up the task in despair.

The habitation allotted the instructor was a shack of two rooms; this, with a small store-house of similar pretensions, constituted the homestead. Both buildings were of log, with mud plastered between each stick and whitewashed within and without. The roofs were of poles with an outer covering of



POUNDMAKER, 1886

dirt, as was common with all rough houses—and all houses except those of high officials were rough—in the country at that period, and, although Saskatchewan is a very dry province from an agricultural point of view, yet it is still too wet for the old-time roof. These roofs did not merely leak, for the mud fell down along with the water, till the house, and everything in it was in an abominable state; indeed, in wet seasons the only escape was by pitching a tent outside. Luckily we never had any furniture to spoil; a cook stove, table, a box nailed on the wall for a cupboard, other boxes for seats, with a bed, was all it was safe to have inside as household goods.



The Indian buildings which were occupied only in winter, were similar, except that they had mud fireplaces instead of stoves and generally had earthen floors, while ours was of rough lumber. These huts were strung along the six miles of flat that bounded the Battle River and formed, with the "Little Pine" outfit, a continuous settlement. There was a departmental dwelling and storehouse on this latter Reserve, where an Americanised Scotchman acted as go-between in the fight between civilisation and savagery. The Roman Catholic Mission, with a priest and school, rounded off the community.

On Poundmaker's Reserve were about two hundred and fifty Indians, with a very large proportion of able-bodied men among them, fair workers, but resenting all, even advisory interference, and with an undisguised truculence of manner; showing pretty plainly that it was only the dire pressure of circumstances that had brought them to accept the restraint of Reserve life, and further that they were prepared to resist anything that looked like an encroachment on their free will, either as to what they should do, or how they should do it. So, I had to walk warily and be always "on the job", keeping in daily touch with what each was doing, without saying very much, till they got accustomed to me. At first I had trouble with the rations—which were given out daily in order to make the issue coincide with the work done; from morning till night they would come straggling along, so that it took nearly all day rationing. I gave out that I would issue nothing after six in the morning. They countered this by coming as early as daylight would let them, thinking to sicken me of my attempt at efficiency. I told them they could not come too early for me and they gradually fell into arriving about six, which left me the whole day in which to make my rounds.

Thus we managed to get about a hundred and fifty acres under crop, which was quite an accomplishment when all things were considered but, it proved a dry year, with no rain till July, and small prospect of a crop. However, as far as running the Reserve was concerned, things were going quite smoothly when trouble began to appear.

BIG BEAR—

Big Bear was one of the most noted chiefs of the Cree Indians in his time and, prior to the treaty, had a large following. His band—and others—thought very slightly of the terms of that august agreement and sought a livelihood in the south, resisting alike, every inducement and every threat to get them to settle down. The pleasures of an Ishmael life on the prairie more than counterbalanced its perils. They also observed that the southern Indians, either because there was greater menace in their dissatisfaction or because their country was unsuitable for agriculture, were well treated by the department. They were fed beef. So for some time Big Bear stayed down south. But, as time passed and settlement encroached on the wild, the pleasures lessened while the perils increased, so that, little by little, Big Bear was deserted by those of a less hardy nature who came up north and joined the bands on the different Reserves.

In the fall of 1883, a crisis arrived. The roving Indians were committing such serious depredations—though they could not be caught red-handed—that the settlers demanded that all the predatory bands be brought under control. Law and order too were now strong enough to enforce what had hitherto been attempted by negotiation. Accordingly, Big Bear, with his desperadoes—picked by natural selection—was escorted up north and deposited on a Reserve near Fort Pitt. They refused to stay; conditions were not at all suitable. They had to cut cordwood, at so much a cord for a living. They stayed on the Reserve all winter and, when spring came, hitched up their ponies and leisurely travelled down to Poundmaker's—on his invitation, they said. This, if it was so, and there is no reason to doubt it, was in pursuance of that chief's policy of agitation for better terms; his plan was to get as many people as possible settled close together so that they might act in concert. The southern Indians acting as a unit, had perceptibly greater weight in negotiating with the government. They got proportionately better treatment. For the Crees, divided into insignificant units scattered through the country, he said he could

see nothing better in the future but to become the slaves of the white man. With their collected strength, he hoped he could constrain the authorities to make better terms and so give the Indians a more hopeful outlook on the future. Had the Indians known the term, they might have called this "patriotism". The Indian Department called it insubordination and contumacy, and all sorts of bad names, for all their policy had been directed to precluding such an event by closing every avenue that might lead towards it.

THE CRISIS OF '84—

In due course Big Bear arrived and, after him, as quickly as news reached him, came the Indian Agent, with a detachment of Mounted Police. The agent took a high tone and "ordered" the Indians home. This was within his province, since the Indian Act forbids the continued presence of strangers on a Reserve, without the consent of the agent. But the order failed to move the Indians. The police tried to smooth the difficulty over by negotiation, but Big Bear refused to budge. He told the agent that he came by invitation and would leave when he had finished the business that required his presence. To the police he said that he intended no harm and that to leave the relatives and friends who had called on him for counsel and support was a discourtesy that he was incapable of. The matter had, perforce, to be left at that, so the agent went home, leaving the police to keep an eye on the situation.

The Poundmaker Indians had just finished their spring work, so the agent, before leaving for town, ordered that no more rations be given out, hoping thus to starve the visitors into leaving. The Indians straightway built two weirs across the river and got an ample supply of fish from the baskets. Also, they sent messengers with "wah-pay-kin-ee-kun" to all the Indians in the district, calling to a "Thirst Dance" and a conference. The north boundary of the Reserve was named as the meeting place and, in a few days, over two thousand Indians were camped there. There was, apparently, nothing to be done on the part of the authorities but to wait and avoid complications, till the movement should wear itself out and the obnoxious strangers take themselves off home. The police were moved up to Little Pine's, where they would be nearer the heart of things, and in a better strategical position for observation. The Indians seemed absorbed in preparations for the dance; already the tent was nearly ready, and quiet promised

quiet, when a metaphorical bomb fell and burst in our midst. Craig, the instructor on Little Pine's was assaulted by two of Big Bear's young men.

According to Craig's story, they had come while he was in the storehouse and demanded food; which demand he had refused with appropriate gestures. He could speak no Cree: they, no English. Craig seems to have lost his head, since the controversy culminated in his pushing the men out. One of the intruders then took an axe-handle that was near the door and struck Craig on the arm with it. This was an unpleasantness which at such a juncture, should have been avoided. Craig's arm was not injured, but his feelings were, so he took his case to the police. These were a mere handful and could do nothing but send a messenger in to headquarters with news of what had happened. That evening the dance was started, and next morning Superintendent Crozier with the agent and a few troopers as escort came along. I went with them to the camp.

Craig had heard that his assailants were among the dancers so, with him to identify the men, Crozier, the agent and I pushed through the throng of armed Indians into the tent. The drum beat and the dancers bobbed unconcernedly up and down during our inspection of them, but paint and dress have so much to do with an Indian's appearance that Craig failed to find his men. Evening came upon us while so occupied, so the agent and Craig hurried out and procured several ox-teams, which we loaded up with the flour and bacon from Little Pine's storehouse for transportation down to Poundmaker's, in accordance with a plan of campaign formed by Crozier. In the dusk of a mid-June evening we left the instructor's shack. The procession was led by the police; the ox-teams followed, with Craig and myself driving in the rig with the agent, bringing up the rear.

The road led straight through the camp and, as we wished our movements to be as unobtrusive as possible, we made a considerable detour round the circle of tents. Before we had got very far the Indians who had been commandeered to drive the oxen, deserted us. This journey made a lasting impression on me. At the beginning there was quite a suspicion that we would not be allowed to carry off the provisions without interruption. The desertion of our teamsters depressed interruption to molestation and we had serious doubts as to whether we should get through alive. These doubts showed themselves in agitation, in hurry, and in disorder. They received confirma-

tion in the "war-whoops", the yelling and shooting that assailed us till we had passed out of hearing of the camp. I have since come to the conclusion that the Indians were merely trying to frighten us, as the bullets that whistled over our heads might just as easily have been sent into our midst. But we had other things to think of than motives or the dissection of circumstances, and everything sounded real enough at the time. By the way, the war-whoop has quite a blood-curdling effect, especially with conditions such as those under which we made the journey that night. It is produced by yelling in falsetto, and at the same time rapidly slapping the open mouth with the palm of the hand.

The distance from the camp to the creek we had to cross is little more than a mile, measured by the indiscriminating, material chain, which allows nothing for relativity, but, that night, prodding the crawling, insensitive oxen ahead of us, and precipitated, as it were by the ravening crowd behind us, proved conclusively the existence of a fourth dimension. The distance seemed endless. Here, however, the road ran through the open country. Here, we could not be attacked unaware. The creek we had to cross ran through a wide bed of willows and had a bottom of quicksand. There, was the ideal place for an ambush and, if we escaped before that, there, we expected the Indians would waylay us. Not once but twenty times had we to stop, for one thing or another along the road. Craig had joined the teamsters, to give his uneasy spirit something to exhaust itself on. So the agent and I formed the rear guard or, acted as a buttress behind. Of course, when we came to the creek the wagons stuck in the sand. We doubled up; we lightened the loads; indeed we tried all the easy remedies for such emergencies that we could think of. But, in the end, all the flour and bacon had to be unloaded and carried to the far side, with the unnerving fear of attack from the bushes all around us, to bring fear and disorder into our midst, for we could have made no effectual resistance in any case. But, nothing happened; the yelling and shooting at last died down and we reached the instructor's house at Poundmaker's, physically unscathed, to unload the wagons in the early dawn.

After a hurried meal, Crozier despatched two of his men to town with orders to bring up the remainder of the detachment with what volunteers could hastily be got together. The rest of us were employed in building a bastion at each end of the little house with the logs from an old shack we pulled down. It did not occur to me at the time, since I was too busy to give

the matter thought, but, often afterwards I wondered whether these bastions would have been of any advantage to us in the event of our having to take refuge from the Indians in these buildings. In the first place, fifty men would have crowded them and Crozier had three times that number assembled on the field the next day; again, one of the bastions faced a bush from which we could have been picked off by snipers; and lastly, neither of them was a bastion in much more than name. They were, in some sense, shelters in addition to the house from which men, too crowded to do anything but get in one another's way, could have fired at the enemy until the Indians rushed the place and massacred us all. The Indians had a very poor opinion of them.

When the fortifications were completed and we had eaten a miscellaneous dinner, Crozier determined to make an attempt to induce the chiefs to give the offenders up to justice and so avoid any chance of a collision between the police and the Indians, for we were told quite frankly that the two men whom it was sought to arrest had resolved to resist, even if they had to seek the aid of arms. In fact, they said they would not be taken alive.

So, once more, Major Crozier, the Indian Agent and I, drove up to the camp. The dance was at its height; the drum sounded its monotonous boom, and the singing was in full vigor, when we poked our heads into the tent. As, though totally unconcerned, no one took the slightest notice of our presence but, the little while we were there was time enough for fifty or sixty Indians to assemble on horseback with all their finery and arms and arrogance, to escort us to the tents of the chiefs, whither we had asked our way. They were looking for trouble and needed only something to start them. A word from either Poundmaker or Big Bear would have done it but both these chiefs were interested in the opposite direction. Trouble, they were not averse from, as long as it went only a certain length, but they wished as little as we did that it should come to a clash of arms. Quite a number of their followers, however, would have liked nothing better than a row, and they did their utmost to precipitate a collision by taunts to us and incitement to each other—by riding madly backward and forward and firing off their guns.

We got Poundmaker and Big Bear into the latter's tent together and Crozier and the agent spent much time and endeavor in trying to persuade one or the other of them to give the

offenders up. Both chiefs talked quite reasonably but neither would undertake the job. As a matter of fact, neither was able to do it. Both, however, were emphatic in declaring that trouble was inevitable if the police tried to take their prisoners while the dance was in progress. Big Bear at length made the proposition, that if Crozier would defer his attempted arrest till the dance was finished—which it would be that same evening—the Indians would go down to Poundmaker's in a body when the police might take the men if they could. This was the best that could be obtained, so with that understanding we returned to our base of operations.

Our reinforcements arrived that evening; quite an imposing body of men, but how many, I never heard. At sundown the dancing ceased, but the drum never stopped throbbing nor did the camp sink into repose, so we spent a wakeful night: in fact day had already dawned when we sank to sleep. The sun was high when we came to life again. Everything was quiet. The Indian camp might have been a camp of the dead; they were sleeping the sleep of exhaustion. The morning was spent in making every preparation we could think of in anticipation of trouble. Just before noon we saw what appeared to be the whole camp of Indians on the move towards us; they came and passed us and up on to the plateau by the road that would lead them home if they kept moving. This road incidentally looked down into our fortification. In passing, Chief Sweet Grass called in to inform Major Crozier that he was ~~not~~ in sympathy with the intrigues of Big Bear and Poundmaker, so, now that the dance was over, he was leading his people home. This sounded very nice, but they did not relinquish their commanding position till all the fuss was over.

ARREST OF MEN WHO ASSAULTED CRAIG—

Scarcely had they filed up on to the high ground when we heard Big Bear and his following approaching. First arrived the horsemen, tricked out in full war costume, yelling and racing up and down near our camp. Those on foot followed, halting a couple of hundred yards from the buildings and making the air reverberate with their cries. Leaving enough men to man the bastions, Crozier marched out to arrest the offenders, Craig going with him as guide. They were immediately lost in the moving crowd of Indians, as they marched to-and-fro in their search. Luck that day was on our side. The police were under orders not to take the offensive or to use their arms; consequently they met with a good deal of hustling

that they might not resist. But their time soon came. With the paint washed off their faces and in their ordinary attire, one of the men was recognised by Craig as soon as his eyes rested on him. The police advanced to make the arrest and the fellow fled! He had a big knife on his person, which he had boasted he would use. They caught him, and he submitted without any attempt at resistance.

It would be impossible to describe the excitement that prevailed during all this time—it was not more than half an hour from start to finish, but it seemed ages—the tension: the shouts of incitement of the young bloods to finish us off without delay: the cautioning of older heads, to let the white men begin the fight—the racing to-and-fro—and the piercing war whoops—all combined to make an indelible impression on the memory. Events were on a hair trigger for a while:—yet, nothing happened.

The summer before this, the Indians—at File Hills—successfully stood off the Mounted Police who were trying to make an arrest. They had given in technically only, and from negotiation rather than by force, and the story of this success had spread all over the West. This affair might have ended in the same way. Few would have attempted what Crozier did, but he had long experience in dealing with the natives and he knew that if they once find that you are afraid of them, not only is all your influence gone but it can never be recovered. The men who had assaulted Craig were loud in their asseverations of not allowing themselves to be taken. They said they would rip up anyone who tried to arrest them. Had their spirit been equal to their will, a fight was unavoidable. During that half an hour, then, any little mishap would have started a row—a gun going off accidentally—a chance encounter—any roughness on the part of the police. Everything was ripe for our extermination; none would have escaped. However, it just was not to be.



FINE DAY—Leader of Indians at Cut Knife

Much less likely circumstances precipitated the Rebellion. In that case, a decrepit old man—in derision more than anything else, for he was unarmed and too old to do any harm, thrusting aside the interpreter's rifle, so upset the latter's equilibrium, that he shot the old man dead, when the rest followed as a matter of course. In the present case, the police kept their heads, and restrained themselves, though some of the bolder Indians tried to irritate them into some indiscretion that would warrant retaliation and begin a row; attention, however was all directed to the taking of the two culprits and these incidents passed as minor and unimportant trifles.

Two brothers took part in the Craig assault. One, the principal, was captured after inglorious flight. The police and volunteers who, to search effectually for their men, had operated necessarily in extended order, now closed their ranks and marched, with their prisoner in the centre, down to our camp—perhaps a couple of hundred yards off. All around was pandemonium; Indians galloping to-and-fro, yelling and encouraging each other to set on and doing everything, in fact, they could think of as calculated to inspire us with fear and throw us into disorder. It was our lucky day, however, for not only was

the prisoner brought safely through it all but the brother, in trying to provide an opportunity for the prisoner's escape: made himself so conspicuous as to be recognised and taken.

The crowd of Indians followed us to the camp and, after the prisoners had been ironed and placed inside the building, Crozier and the agent came forward to try and persuade the people to go quietly back to their tents. They chose the easiest and most effective way to encompass this end. They threw open the store-house, and dealt out provisions to all the most important men, that is to those who had come most prominently before his notice during the last three eventful days. This really meant those with the most cheek, as there was little time for discrimination.

While the distribution was proceeding, Crozier called me to one side and asked if I thought I could safely stay on the ground and pursue the accustomed routine, as though nothing had happened out of the ordinary. He did not want the Indians to regard the affair as anything greater than an incident and, to keep up this fiction, while he did not want me to take any desperate chances, if it were at all possible, he would like me to stay. His request took me altogether by surprise, since I had never even contemplated such a thing. The police were going; Craig was not to be left behind. And, had I been given time to reflect, without responsibility being thrown on my decision, the answer would certainly have been "No". I told Crozier that I would see what the chiefs thought about it. I first interviewed Poundmaker, who would not commit himself—"He did not know". I had better see "Oo-pin-ow-way-win". I did so, but he was a prominent malcontent and declined responsibility. He referred me to "Ta-twa-sin", who would not touch the proposition. Finally, I went to Little Pine. All the other chiefs evidently considered it to be a dangerous undertaking on my part but, Little Pine, without the slightest hesitation, declared that it was the proper thing to do and that he would stand by me if I should decide to make the experiment. It is one of the unwritten laws of the Indian that there is safety in the protection of a chief. I knew that if I stepped carefully, I ran the risk of the unforeseen only. My brother and a young English companion, who had come up with the volunteers, said they would stay with me and give me their moral support. Circumstances seemed to combine to make me stay, so I told Crozier just how the idea had been received by the Indians and that, though I did not relish the position in which he was placing me, I had decided to stay.

The army of occupation departed for town with their prisoners; the crowd of Indians dissolved into the gathering dusk and we three were left to go over the events of the last few days and to speculate on what the morrow would bring forth. Thinking it over thus, we could realise what a narrow margin had stood between us and death. The attitude of those Indians who were undoubtedly friendly showed that they did not believe it possible that the arrest of the two men could be accomplished without ending in a fight. They deplored the idea of a rupture, but that would not prevent them siding with their own people, when it came to be white man against red. The two culprits were known to be "bad men", so, when they said and repeated and asseverated that they would not be taken without resistance, everyone believed them and foresaw what must follow. As it was, in the tension of excitement during the hunt and arrest, the smallest thing would have turned the balance between peace and war. And, to do the chiefs justice, they were powerless in the hands of the young bloods, and were forced into the position of Red against White.

We did not sleep long that night; events were treading on each other's heels. In the early dawn of the summer morning, we were wakened by a thundering on the door. Indians, armed in all kinds of ways, were demanding their share of the "grub" that was being distributed. These, it appeared, had been overlooked the evening before, or they had gone home early to avoid trouble, or some other equally good reason was given for getting what they wanted. In any case, it behooved me as one in charge to repair such portentous omissions and heal up properly the wounded feelings of the Indians after such a providential escape. Of course, all this sounds tame and commonplace enough and it is only when connected with the wild character of the speakers and with every menace of voice and action, of appearance and demeanor reinforced by untiring pertinacity, that an estimate can be formed of the contract I found on my hands. I was alarmed at this ravening attitude but, fortunately, not so badly as to fall before their demonstrations or comply with their demands. I was extremely careful in what I said and avoided all-controversy, replying to all that I had no authority to give away anything, that if they considered they were entitled to flour and bacon, they could easily take it, since I had no more power to stop them than I had to give it to them. They had no intention of breaking into the store, however, as I soon found out; they wanted me to give it to them and were doing their best to frighten me into doing it. One lot would

go away, and be replaced by another, who would repeat the general performance, with such variations as suggested themselves to the individuals. This continued from dawn till dark and I shall ever remember it as the greatest strain on my nerves that I had yet experienced. But they did not get anything and I went up several notches in the Indians' esteem.

My brother and his companion had enough of it by night and made up their minds to get out as quickly as possible, earnestly entreating me to accompany them. It was a great temptation but I could never have faced Major Crozier had I allowed myself to be frightened away after having successfully stood off the main attack. I resolved to stay and see the thing through. At the worst, the Indians could only take the store. So my partners left for town and, after they had disappeared over the hill, I got on horseback and rode off to interview Little Pine.

I explained the developments of the situation to him, and told him how I was beset by the interminable procession of beggars; I showed him how it was for the good of the Indians generally that nothing should happen to rekindle the smouldering fire of discontent that needed only time to die out altogether, and I gave him to understand that there was great likelihood of the storehouse being rifled unless he could interpose his authority to stay the ravening or in some way raise the siege.

He said the goods were too distant from his camp for his authority to be effective and proposed that the contents of the store be moved up to his Reserve where, he said, things would be under somebody's eye continually and so free from molestation. To keep them down on Poundmaker's in isolation, was to invite marauding. He procured several ox-teams and, before night, we had the provisions stowed safely in the new storehouse, with the key in Little Pine's charge. No rations were to be given out till the strangers departed and the home Indians went to work.

I had no further trouble. The Indians—Poundmaker's, Big Bear's and Lucky Man's—were still camped round the site of the Thirst Dance and, though many fish were obtained from the baskets in the weirs on the river, yet the camp soon began to feel the pinch of hunger. The chiefs could find no way of accomplishing their project of concentration; they had all been told that when they dispersed to their several Reserves they would receive rations and there seemed but one thing for

the Indians to do. They showed no hostility, indeed, I found my reputation had moved up several notches from having dared to stay there after the police had gone. About a week elapsed before the agent ventured to send enquiries as to how things had gone since the police left with their prisoners; this was not because of absence of anxiety, but rather on account of there being too much of it. Wild rumors were in circulation in the town, concerning the doings of the Indians. They were killing cattle. They were prowling round the adjacent country, frightening the settlers, and so on. The agent was not sure that it was safe to trust a messenger. But the messenger—an Indian from Sweet Grass—reported all quiet. The excitement was over; the seething had subsided. Within a fortnight, Big Bear was on his way to Onion Lake, where land was allotted him, while Poundmaker's and Lucky Man's Indians had settled down to their usual routine on their several Reserves. The formidable had dispersed.

A great deal more flour and bacon had been served out during the month that ought to have shown a light issue in the slack time, and it required all the ingenuity of the Indian Office to give such smoothness as would not raise suspicion, to the returns that were sent down to Headquarters for the month of June.

Reviewing mentally this episode, I am not sure that I have done justice to the points that emphasise the bare margin by which about three hundred of us escaped death and the country a catastrophe that would have deluged the land with blood. The Indians expected trouble, because, though many of them were not anxious for it, there was a considerable element that desired nothing better and could be relied on to help it along. Everything hung on two points—the resistance of the man who was to be arrested and the unguarded action of the first law of nature in some fearful soul during that arrest. Both points had every chance in their favor, yet all these chances failed.

Two slight circumstances recur to me as I write. Poundmaker, when I saw him during the last scene of the last act, when all the head men were talking to Crozier after the arrest, was armed with an instrument of wood, about one and a half inches by four, three feet long, with one end shaved down to serve as a handle, and with four or five butcher knife-blades embedded therein so as to leave a few inches sticking out on one edge—a terrible weapon if your adversary is running away or is afraid of you. Poundmaker's opinion of the white man

was Crozier's opinion of the Indian—that one only needed a club to kill them. The second item is, that the chiefs who conducted negotiations with Crozier averred that he wore what must have been a coat of mail under his outside garment. I thought this unlikely at the time but have since seen reason to alter my opinion. Very little escapes the observation of the Indian.

I am reminded of another, and in some respects, a similar adventure, in which I played an involuntary part. Again, it was a case in which a man, whose circumstances and position demanded that he be calm and unmoved under provocation, and lose neither his temper or his presence of mind. The time was later, and the scene, another Reserve. I was in the employ of the Indian Department as interpreter, and accompanied the agent on his rounds of the different Reserves. The occasion was a wrangle between an Indian and his instructor on the ration question, ending in a technical assault on the latter by the former. The times had changed, it is true, but the Indian, isolated on his Reserve, had not progressed with them. Also, this Indian had earned the reputation of being a bad man, a truculent fellow, one of those untiringly contumacious spirits that infect and spoil an otherwise calm and patient community, and one of those who, unfortunately have to be allowed to commit the overt act of illegality which their continued insubordination unfailingly predicates, before they can be brought under the restraint that is no longer preventative as it can never be reparatory.

The instructor was assaulted and the majesty of the law had to be vindicated, so, on word being despatched to Battleford, a police rig with a driver, a sergeant and another came up to the Reserve to arrest the Indian. The agent and I were already at the instructor's house when the police arrived and, as they had come away without their own interpreter, I was conscripted to act in that capacity. The Indian, as I have said, had a very bad reputation and had, furthermore given out his intention of shooting anyone who should attempt to arrest him. His fellows expected him to do it and passed their apprehensions of trouble along to us, so we took every precaution we could think of—not to prevent his shooting, which was beyond our power, but to make sure that he should not escape. It was a three mile drive to where he lived, and a sharp turn in the road near the dwelling gave very little time for him to do much before we should be up to his door in the front of the house, where there were no windows through which he might

pop us off. It was arranged that I should precede the others—an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotchman; all good reliable men—and open the door while the police stood, weapon in hand, one on each side of me, ready to shoot if the Indian resisted, attempted to use his rifle or tried to escape. I carried no arms, since it would be impossible for me to use any in the situation. I made no pretence of liking the job, but I was satisfied that the Indian could not escape the attentions of the police on either side of me, no matter how I fared. So I unlatched the door and pushed it wide open, advancing myself within the threshold with the ready rifle of a policeman on each side of me. The Indian stood waiting in the foreground. He merely smiled as he put forth his wrists for the handcuffs. He was bundled into the rig and taken down to the barracks. Here again, nothing happened though there seemed quite a chance of it.

But it should not be lost sight of that both these cases arose over a few pounds of flour or bacon. For years past, when the Indians were at their wildest, the Hudson's Bay Company has had men occupying isolated posts among the Crees—and hungry Crees at times—with little record of trouble and no loss of life. Yet these traders had no better backing than their character and the reputation of their masters. Any difficulty they made for themselves, they had to find a way out of. These are the same people that the Indian Department had to deal with but with anything but a happy result. Disputes and heart burnings have marked every step of the way. The backing of authority and force has not prevented occasional petty outbreaks. And the Indian is always in the wrong. It was not an uncommon occurrence for an instructor to throw an Indian out of the house—even to kick him out, and not unlikely that the Indian would thereupon also be sent to goal for his insubordination. So bitter has been the experience of the Indian, that to this day it is the universal opinion of these wards of the government that a white man, clothed with authority necessarily becomes domineering. It may be accounted for presumption thus to criticise the Indian Department and forty years ago it would have been treason, but these words have to be said.

The excitement of the Thirst Dance over, and all the visitors gone, our Indians returned, each to his little holding, and resumed work. I should perhaps mention that there was no community holding on the Reserve, but each Indian had his own little farm, from which he produced whatever his skill and industry, supplemented by the climate, allowed. Indeed; it

was one of the cardinal principles we had to inculcate—this survival of the fittest, to give it the most high-sounding appellation I could think of. Even in this disguise, the text is quite a hard one to preach a sermon on and keep a straight face.

ORIGIN OF 1885 REBELLION—

Back to work, I found that things were now considerably easier than they had been before the eventful dance. I knew the Indians, individually, better and I had, to a great extent, gained experience of them as a band. They were now more willing to avail themselves of advice, generally amenable to reason and not at all lazy. In any case, there was always the chief to appeal to and I could always rely on his being able and willing to see my side of the question, when any hitch occurred. The members of the band were mostly young and, with the limited means placed at their disposal by the department, made a respectable showing. They really wished to try out the white man's means of livelihood. This is speaking generally. There were a few to whose confidence I never could find entrance, but they were exceptions.

The year 1884 was a dry year and the crop through the West was a failure. This was not disheartening to the Indians only, but every settlement felt the pressure of want. Battleford, at that time was a divisional point of the N.W.M.P.; it had a resident judge and various government officials and the money circulated by these stipendiaries prevented the dearth being so badly felt in that district. Prince Albert, on the other hand, had none of these advantages. It was an outpost, merely, of the police force, with only a few subordinates in charge and had no resident government officials. It was a settlement of farmers, leavened by just the necessary complement of other occupations, so that failure of crops in '84, following shortness in '83, was a very serious matter. It was clearly "up to" the Prince Albert people to do something.

First, the government was asked to make the town a centre for the police force. There were Reserves in all directions a short distance away and a large force was quite as necessary there as at Battleford. The government could not see their way to this. At this momentous juncture someone discovered that a few of the Red River Halfbreeds who came to Saskatchewan immediately after the first Rebellion had not participated in the distribution of Scrip. This can only be explained on the assumption that they had good reasons for avoiding publicity and wittingly kept their whereabouts quiet. It was also put

forward that the children grown up since that time ought to be similarly recognised, either as a matter of desert or of right.

Public meetings were held, in which practically the whole population took up the case of the Halfbreeds and called on the government to repair these serious wrongs. The Scrip, when issued, would at once be thrown on the market, bought for next to nothing and a great amount of money put into circulation. In this agitation, it was notorious that the prominent men took the lead. Every variety of wild talk was indulged in at these meetings and very few had either the will or the courage to dissent.

The Halfbreeds took the hint thus given them—if it could be called a hint—and joined the agitation. They imagined that the whites were in earnest, and would be on their side against the government. The situation appealed so strongly to those in local authority, that an appeal was made to Ottawa on its behalf. But the government would do nothing.

The Halfbreeds had, by now, been talked into believing that they had wrongs to be redressed; they were strongly interested and their agitation, abetted by the whole population of the district, became more and more pronounced. As Ottawa appeared unmoved by all these declamations, the thoughts of all turned to Riel. It was resolved to ask him to come to Saskatchewan and give them the advantage of his weight and experience. This scheme, if it did not originate with the white people, at least had their secret approval. One of those delegated to visit Riel in his Montana home—he was a Scotch Halfbreed, J. Isbister, an old Hudson Bay man—not satisfied with *sub rosa* backing would not leave till he had obtained from a very prominent person, a letter giving some sort of authorisation for the mission. Riel accompanied these men back to Duck Lake, the centre of the Halfbreed settlements.

(The tradition persists that Lawrence Clarke was an active sympathiser with the early stages of the Rebellion. The matter was discussed in the press in May, 1885. Isbister said that he went straight from the meeting which decided to call Riel, to Lawrence Clarke, and that Clarke had said that there will have to be a rebellion. Clarke admitted the visit but claimed that he had turned Isbister out of his office with indignation at his design to bring Riel in. The Prince Albert paper claimed, probably with justice, that Lawrence Clarke's word could be relied upon.)

A few miles from the Reserve across the Battle River was a large settlement of Halfbreeds, English and French. The Prince Albert movement, from its inception to the arrival of Riel was public property and was understood as an attempt to

force the government to spend money in the district and, indirectly help the settlers through the times of their distress. The idea of bringing this about by force of arms, though talked about, was never entertained seriously by those who started and helped forward the agitation. There was no question of the Indians being in any way interested. During the winter of '84, a French Halfbreed from Duck Lake was teaching school at Bresaylor, the settlement referred to. He appeared to be in constant communication with Duck Lake and broadcasted all information that came to his hands during the winter. It was from that source principally that we, on the Reserve heard what was going on. The Indians were constantly back and forward, bringing all the gossip they gathered there. In fact, word came regularly through, not only to us on Reserves but every one in the district. The Indian Agent was aware of what was going on, and repeatedly said that there was no danger. If the situation was serious, it was not serious enough to deserve even comment in our little weekly paper. If the authorities did entertain apprehension, they hid it very carefully from those who held isolated positions on Reserves and were therefore nearer to danger.

The Bresaylor settlers were mostly of a class superior, they were fairly well off, owning quite a number of stock; they had no need of and expected no government assistance; they had seen all they wanted to see of fighting the government, in the first Rebellion in Red River; so that what interest they took in the agitation of their poorer relatives at Duck Lake was neither a warm nor a personal one. There were a few of the needier among them, more intimately connected with the Duck Lake people, who only waited an opportunity to join up. These thoroughly believed in Riel and the programme of the discontents, but for this their poverty and their ignorance were all to blame.

The Halfbreed grievance was the Indian grievance. The question of Scrip was merely an excuse. They had owned the country; they had lived well and easily; now both their country and their means of existence were gone. The white man had deprived them without giving adequate return. Most Half-breeds were hunters and knew nearly as little of farming as the Indian and they could not make a living by tilling the ground. The Bresaylor settlement was therefore divided into every degree between opposition and co-operation.

THE REBELLION BREAKS OUT—

About the end of March, there was a noticeable stir among the Indians. It was rumoured that war had broken out at Duck Lake. The police had gone out to fight and had been beaten. How the news arrived is unknown, but the Indians heard of it early and their comments and speculations were not reassuring. There had been several police killed, indeed they might have been wiped out had Riel not stayed the 'Halfbreeds' hands. Such was the Indian story. It was war. What the Indians would do, was not yet decided.



ROBERT JEFFERSON

Eventually, the Reserves emptied themselves on the road to town. Out of about six hundred people, only some twenty remained at home on Poundmaker's. Craig, who was still in charge of Little Pine, and Lucky Man, whose land ran contiguously to Poundmaker, up the Battle River, came down to my place to talk the matter over. We knew there was danger, but did not know how much. However, after much agitated discussion, we took the trail to Sweet Grass, about eighteen miles down the Battle River, where we understood the Indians were to camp for the night.

McKay was instructor there, a man of the country and of much experience and whose judgment in a crisis like the present we might safely follow. We three talked the matter over from every point of view and ended up in uncertainty. The Indians held a big council that night and after it was over, McKay called Sweet Grass in to find out what had been decided on. But we could pump very little out of him. He said that he was not altogether in sympathy with the meeting, but could not separate himself from what the whole people seemed to have set their hearts on doing, and that on the morrow they intended going down to Battleford to interview the agent, since they deemed that this was a crisis that would give their requests as great force as demands. He did not anticipate any trouble. They did not seek it.

We three instructors debated long as to whether we should stay or go into town, and eventually decided to bluff the thing out. The affair of '84 showed that there might be great excitement among Indians without anything serious happening and really, as yet, there was nothing more than apprehension to cause us to run away. So, the next morning Craig and I went home—that is to Poundmaker's Reserve. All day we talked matters over, and the more we talked, the more we frightened ourselves; indeed Craig paced the floor most of the night gradually working himself up, till his fortitude gave way under the ever increasing array of possibilities. The result was that next morning early he started off for Battleford. It took a tremendous exertion of self-restraint to prevent me from going with him: the thought of how foolish we would look if nothing came of all the fuss, alone kept me back.

On the one side, we knew that the Indians were bitterly disappointed. They had accepted the statement of the white man that a living—independence—could be obtained by tilling the ground. This hope of eventual escape from dire poverty, alone had kept their inexperienced hands at work; had restrained their chafing openly at the assumption of superiority and domination of men, nearly as ignorant, and not more intelligent than themselves. In this hope they had borne hunger, disease and want for several years and they were no nearer their goal. It looked as though they might die off before they reached it—that is, if it existed. Poundmaker once said, while the Rebellion was in its first stages—"Of old, the Indian trusted in his God and his faith was not in vain. He was fed, clothed and free from sickness. Along came the white man and persuaded the Indian that this God was not able to keep up the care. The

Indian took the white man's word and deserted to the new God. Hunger followed and disease and death." "Now," said he, "we have returned to the God we know; the buffalo will come back, and the Indian will live the life that God intended him to live." They were disappointed and discontented.

There was a point of view other than the Indian's. Hayter Reed, who was then at the head of Indian affairs, had calculated to a nicety how much work a yoke of oxen and a plow were capable of performing in a given time and the Indian fell a good deal short of this. He had figured out how little food it was possible to get along with and the Indian was always hungry. The Indian was lazy, therefore he must have short rations; if he fell sick, there was the doctor who could give him pills but no food.

All these things ran through my mind that night. Craig had a fixed idea that it was not intended that the Indian should become self-supporting. He was only to be kept quiet till the country filled up when his ill will could be ignored. My own opinion was that the government was in earnest, so far as its aims were concerned, but that its measures were hopelessly inadequate. I knew, too, that most of the Indians were peacefully inclined, and would have to be forced into a row, while the truculent and contumacious were a small minority, and the chances were that the trouble would disappear under a shower of flour and bacon.

Craig, therefore drove off to town, and while on the subject, I may as well dispose of him, as he here fades out from my narrative. He overtook the crowd of Indians at Finlayson's, about six miles from Battleford, where they were camped for the night, and had no difficulty in passing through them and reaching the barracks. I saw him when the trouble was over and heard his story, which was amusing rather than wonderful. He had devoted his time and attention to looting the stores and houses, that had been broken into by the Indians, but his enterprise was frustrated by the persistent robbing of his tent whenever he left it. He could not keep a thing unless he sat on it. Whenever I think of Craig, a saying of his recurs to me, which I have always regarded as cryptic. How the subject started I cannot recollect, but he told me that wherever he could get his head in, he could get his body to follow. He went farming after things quieted down, and, after a few years returned to the United States.

Also, as Mr. McKay disappears from the scene, I may mention that the first arrivals from town after the rupture, the breaking into the stores, and the news that the Stonies had murdered Payne, their instructor, helped McKay to cross the Battle River, with his family, but with nothing more than their clothes. Once across, they made their way to the settlement without much trouble and from there reached town.

It appears that the the council held at Sweet Grass Reserve, the night we were there, the ambassadors sent by Riel to the Indians had told of the fight at Duck Lake, of the cutting of the telegraph line and imprisonment of several white men, of the secession of the Prince Albert people, and of the determination of the Halfbreeds to fight to the end. They were fighting the Indian's battle as well as their own; they were all of one blood, and wanted the Indians to rise, and assist in getting the rights of the owners of the country.

SO-CALLED SIEGE OF BATTLEFORD—

Early in the morning of the third day, the Indians appeared in force round the agent's office on the south side of the Battle River. The houses and the stores were deserted; everyone had taken refuge in the barracks. The Judge had fled just in time to get through the Stoney Reserve before the murder of Instructor Payne. Even the Halfbreeds had vanished into the hinterland, for they feared one side as much as the other. One solitary individual—the cook—had the temerity to continue in residence at the old government house. He had many visitors that day, gave them to eat, when they departed without harming him.

The Red Pheasant crowd—most of them—arrived soon after the rest. The messengers from Duck Lake had called at their Reserve first, before going to the Stonies. This band was divided in opinion, a few seeking safety in hiding among the hills, while the most of them trekked into town. They brought the news that the Stonies had murdered their instructor, Tremont, and also a settler who lived near them and were on their way across country to Poundmaker's. From out this assemblage Poundmaker was acclaimed as chief. He made some little demur, but was reminded that this was only the culmination of his continuous agitation and it was only right that he should continue at the front; so, he eventually gave in, more flattered than apprehensive.

Soon messengers came from the north side of the river. The agent wished to know what the gathering of the Indians meant. What did they want? They wished to see the agent. The agent refused to come. He sent Peter Ballendine, a native, and at one time employee of the Hudson's Bay Company; he had lived in the district and traded with these Indians for years, so he was both suitable and safe. But he could do nothing with them. They wanted the agent. Had Payne and Tremont not been killed by the Stonies, it is highly probable that the disturbance had ended right there. The agent would have come across the river and met them. He would have made whatever concessions were needful and the Indians would have returned to their homes. But, the Stonies had thrown down the gauntlet and all the Indians were involved. Under such circumstances the agent might be excused for playing safe. A man like Crozier would have crossed the river and met the chief, and by force of character settled matters then and there. But it was not to be.

Balked in their efforts to get the agent, the Indians came down into the flat; the houses, the stores were deserted and at their mercy. But nothing was touched till evening. Even then the raiders were mostly women, with only a few men of little consequence. The judge's house was fired, how, nobody seemed to know. Next morning not an Indian was to be seen. Hastily grabbing whatever in sight took their fancy, they hurried off homeward, pursued in imagination by police through the darkness. It was a regular stampede. They had been too hurried to take much: the principal looting was the work of the white men. As soon as the coast was clear in the morning they came over in detachments and finished what the Indians had begun. They made a clean sweep.

The third day after the exodus to town, before mid-day, one of the Indians who had remained at home came along. He said that the people were returning and reported that the Stonies had killed their instructor and another man, that the goods had been stolen from the stores, and that the bands were recruited by the Red Pheasant Indians, and were in full flight back to the Reserve—finally that all the white settlers had abandoned their homes and taken refuge in the barracks, leaving what little property they had at the Indians' mercy.

IN DANGER ON THE RESERVE—

This Indian—my visitor—whose name was "Chatsees", said that, alone as I was, with nobody near, I stood a great

chance of falling a victim to one or other of the turbulent element, who had personal grievances to redress and who now had an opportunity of administering the law according to their own ideas but, that, if I would come along with him to his house, he would undertake to keep me safe till Poundmaker should arrive. He did not think the chief would want me to be killed, but my ultimate fate was in Poundmaker's hands when he arrived. I had a good deal of confidence in myself and in my attitude toward the Indians but fortunately did not disdain this practical exhibition of good will. But, before making any move, I remembered that after the racket of the summer the police had left behind two kegs of snider cartridges, which, thinking there might be some enquiry made for them, I had kept in the storehouse. Our shack was built on the edge of a swamp, close to which I had dug a little well for our supply of drinking water, and into this hole I poured the contents of the two kegs.

Chatsees had brought a pony and cart along; I had nothing of any value except a few clothes, which we quickly loaded up; we jumped in, and Chatsees drove along the flat to his shack. The place was small, built of big poles, with the door in front and a half sash window at each end, after the usual fashion of Indian shacks. The furniture consisted of a table, a bed made of rough poplar poles and two or three boxes for seats. The man was married and had two children, both small.

Shortly after mid-day, Chatsees' father-in-law, who lived near, came into the shack, looked at me a moment as though he had something on his mind and then told Chatsees that he had better send the white man out of the house; that Ta-twa-sin and Oo-pin-oway-win were going to kill me and that he did not want bloodshed inside to frighten the women and children. I sat on a small box just under one of the windows; Chatsees was lounging on the bed. He regarded his father-in-law for what seemed to me—but could not have been—a long time; turned round on the bed and reached down a gun that hung on the wall. This he deliberately loaded and cocked, while the old man stood silently gazing at him. "I brought him in, and I am not going to send him out," he said, "If they come in here, there will be more blood shed than the white man's. . . . I am keeping him here till Poundmaker arrives. When the chief comes, he can dispose of the man as he pleases." The old man stood for awhile silent, then turned and went out. I learned afterwards that the two would-be-murderers, after a short hesitation, took the road to Little Pine's, where they went through

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the instructor's possessions—which were few—and robbed the Halfbreed interpreter of everything he had. There were several visitors during the afternoon, bringing news of one kind and another, and I really think as little to their taste as to my own. They regarded themselves as intrigued into a quarrel of some one else, implicated by the murders of the Stonies and involved in war against their will. I tried to impress on them, that if the affair went no further, each individual would be called to answer for his own doings only but, this was so contrary to all their customs and ideas that they could not believe it.

The day was wearing away, when Chatsees told me that he thought the Indians must by this time have arrived, that he was going to join the camp and would have to take me along. We had only a mile or so to go and on arrival found everything in agitated disorder. Some tents were pitched; others in course of erection, while many apparently did not know what to do; armed men were parading about everywhere—and Poundmaker had not yet arrived.

Chatsees was now in a quandary. He might be able to put up a defence in a log shack, but could do nothing out in the open if any ill-disposed person regarded my presence offensively. As a way out of the difficulty, he piloted me to the house of an Indian, whom we believed to be friendly, which stood invitingly near. There were a number of Indians inside, talking events over. I heard that when the bands got to town, they were met by the news that the Stonies had murdered two men and were out on the war-path, thus cutting off any hope of peace; that the assemblage of Indians had elected Poundmaker as chief—against which his modesty demanded a disclaimer—that the Indian agent was so frightened that he refused to cross the river to meet them in council; that all the settlers had taken refuge in the barracks; and that finally, they had hastily raided the stores, before stampeding off home. Their fears took the form of hearing imaginary pursuit all night long.

Word was brought that Poundmaker's tent was now up, and an old man volunteered to conduct me to that sanctuary. The people in the house were friendly, but not to the extent of running much risk for a comparative stranger. My guide, however, was a Stoney whom I had known before coming to the Reserve, and as it was Stonies we were most doubtful about, this old man was undoubtedly the best person to go with me.

True enough, we were waylaid outside by six or eight Stonies who spread themselves across our path and brought us to a standstill. They were all painted up and armed; one of them, in fact, carried two rifles. They all eyed me venomously, at the same time throwing their rifles from one hand to the other in an intimidating fashion. I knew the men, as well as one can know people who always barricade their intimacies with impenetrable aloofness but I never observed they were so ugly before. I believe I had nerve enough to prevent them seeing I was afraid of them, and after a considerable amount of persuasion on the part of my companion, they let us pass but with great reluctance.

We came to Poundmaker's tent, but he had not yet arrived. There I was left, alone in the tent. The first person to come in was a young Salteaux. "Ah!" he said, as he shook hands with me, "You are still alive." I knew this fellow for a resolute man, and his friendliness was infinitely grateful. After a while, "Kah-meyo-kee-sik-wayo" entered the tent. This man was regarded as the most formidable of contumacious Indians and, when he informed me that he had been sent ahead by Poundmaker to ensure that no harm should befall me, if I were still alive, I felt relieved, as I knew from his reputation that he was quite equal to the task assigned him. He told me—what there was no need to tell me—to stick inside the tent till Poundmaker should come—and then left. But, under the aegis of his name, I felt safe, for the first time.

The place chosen for the camp was in the flat, or rather one of the flats, bordering Cut Knife Creek, and the tents were all erected when Poundmaker with the few bold enough to risk pursuit from Battleford—which everyone seemed to expect—arrived. The flap door was open and he stepped in. Raising his head, he at once saw me and came to the back of the tent with his hand outstretched. "How!" he said, "I am glad that you are still alive. Nobody shall harm you now. I allowed them till I should get back, to work their pleasure on you, but you are unharmed. Henceforth you are safe." My relations with the chief had always been of the most open. As far as I was concerned, I had never been in the least backward in speaking plainly to him, since all my communications had been met by a frankness and an intelligence, that, in contrast with others, might well be considered human. This feeling of intimacy added much to my relief when he stepped into the tent but it sustained rather a shock when he told me that there had been an "Open Season". This, however was more a figure of speech

than anything else and in conformity with Indian customs and ideas, for, as an Indian, he could not have ordered the affair differently. His dignity as a chief would have been sullied by ordaining anything that would strain his influence, or by forbidding anything that might be done ere his wishes were certainly known. Also, all Indian tradition teaches that one who seeks the protection of a chief's tent—or indeed any tent inside the camp is safe while remaining in that camp.

I did not take long to realise that the head man of an Indian band under the treaty is a different person from the chief over twelve or fifteen hundred Indians suddenly freed from all the restraints that law and order had hitherto imposed on them, and irritated by real or imaginary wrongs. He gave me his version of the happenings since he left the Reserve and, while deploring the murders that had precipitated events and confounded his schedule, he had accepted the honor that had been thrust upon him and was prepared to do his duty to his people.

I had the reputation among the Indians of always speaking my mind very plainly and in this case, though the least reflection would have told me to keep my mouth shut, I felt so exercised at the trouble that loomed up in front of the thoughtless Indians and of himself in particular, that I told him they had got themselves into a very serious mess, that troops would arrive sooner or later; that the Halfbreeds and Indians could not hope to contend against the force that would be brought against them, and would be dispersed, and that Riel, if he did not run away, would be hanged.

Then I had another aspect of Poundmaker. "You know nothing," he said. "You are merely the bait that the Indian Department uses to trap the Indians and bring them into subjection. They would care no more for you than for an Indian if you were killed." And so on. He said that a soldier's tent would be organised, so that all would have to keep together, whether they liked or not. Finally, he said that this was the hand of the God, whom the Indians had temporarily deserted, but whom they would now return to, and that the buffalo would emerge from the hiding places to which the God had directed them; that the Indian stomachs would again know plenty, and they would be happy once more. The white man had failed. The Indians all over the North-West would rise as these had done; his adopted father Crowfoot would light the beacon in the south and leave not a policeman alive. Riel had arranged everything.

This kind of argument, was, of course, unanswerable, and answer would be dangerous, so I never referred to the matter again. It was from Poundmaker that I learned how emissaries of Riel had gone from band to band with "wapaykineekun", in an endeavour to raise the Indians in rebellion along with the Halfbreeds, since only with such assistance could the struggle be, to any extent prolonged; that the Red Pheasant people had not accepted their overtures at first, but after the Stonies had killed Payne and Tremont, believing that they were inculpated in any case, all, except a few, who took to the bush, joined the main body. From Red Pheasant's these ambassadors went to the Stonies, who readily listened to their fairy tales. One old man, who treasured a grudge against the instructor, went to the farm house, and murdered him in cold blood. Payne was a man who lived in extremes. He would either be giving Indians his shirt, or kicking them out of the house. He was dragged to the stable and buried out of sight with manure. There were three bands of Stonies—perhaps two hundred and fifty people; they hitched up their ponies and struck off across country towards Poundmaker's. Three of the men, in search of adventure, came to Tremont's place. He was greasing a wagon, preparatory to starting for Battleford. Each Stoney tried to persuade the other to shoot Tremont: the youngest at length yielded to the taunts of his companions, and shot Tremont dead.

EMISSARIES FROM RIEL—

No sooner had the different bands gathered together, than a further deputation from Duck Lake arrived in camp. These men knew of the settlement across Battle River and made up their minds that the settlers should be forced to join the main camp. They knew that these people were waverers; that they wanted to keep out of trouble, and, though they would not go to the barracks, they were just as little inclined to join the active rebels. Their views they put before the Indians and a detachment in force went across the river to interview the Halfbreeds, and ascertain their views towards the new movement and, if necessary intimidate them into joining up.

For a proper comprehension of the Rebellion, a little explanation is necessary. There are as many classes of Halfbreeds as of white men. They range from men educated at Winnipeg or St. Boniface down to those indistinguishable from Indians. The department's definition of Indian is one who lives as Indians do. On all Reserves are Halfbreeds who are called In-

dians and whose names alone raise a question of their origin. Again, there are Scotch and French among them, and a few English. Lastly, some are in good circumstances while others—the greater part—are poor. It is therefore quite reasonable, as it is a matter of fact that the more intelligent, by education and comparative affluence, should fight shy of armed opposition to government. There was also good cause for such not wanting to go into the barracks, though that cause may not be easy to exhibit. Quite a number of Halfbreeds whom the police apprehended were thrown into cells that would bear comparison with the “Black Hole of Calcutta” and kept there till the relief marched into town.

I have already adverted to the fact that one, Joubert, a schoolmaster, was the agent, accredited or affinitive, of Riel, and had been very active amongst the people all winter, keeping them posted on all that transpired at headquarters and working tactfully on the zeal of the ignorant and the apprehensions of the timid.

A number of the Scotch Halfbreeds had fled to the barracks, in Battleford, not any more for protection than to afford tangible proof of loyalty; but, the French Halfbreeds still remained on their farms, and the Indians, not in the least doubting that these were heart and soul with Riel, or at least, ought to be, wanted them to declare themselves by coming over the river, and joining the big camp. But, the Bresaylor people had other views. They had been through the first Rebellion, and had seen the end. They were also better informed than they were at that unfortunate rising; they were in pretty good circumstance and stood to gain nothing, and to lose much by overt connection with the rebels. They had also small faith in any protection that the Mounted Police could afford them. They had therefore decided to remain quietly on their farms, guard their property, and let the two factions fight it out. Neither side would interfere with them.

But this did not suit the Indians. Were these people to sit at home safely, while others fought for benefits that all would share? Were the Indians to bear all the burden in a conflict where the Halfbreeds and not themselves had been the prime movers. . . . No! All must come to the camp, and thus declare their complicity with the movement. They could not stand in between. They must share the risks as well as the benefits.

The Halfbreeds resisted, but while the dispute was going on, the Indians drove off all the cattle they could collect, so that, though argument barely escaped taking the form of blows, the Halfbreeds reluctantly gathered what goods they possessed that were portable, and came across the Battle River with their conductors.

When the Indians crossed the river on their expedition to Bresaylor, they, at the same time sent a party of missionaries to convert the Moo-so-min and Kah-pit-ik-koo bands, neither of which had been represented in the demonstration at Battleford a few days before. But, these were Wood Indians, a different type altogether; a people whose experience of fighting was limited to struggles with nature and wild life. Their only knowledge of the plains and life there, was the trifle gained in occasional and hurried trips after buffalo meat. Of war-parties, and raids, and horse-stealing, of violence, and battle, and murder, they knew only from tales. With them, the menace of the white man's wrath and retaliation had much greater weight than any problematical results of rebellion. The risk of dying by starvation was more easily guarded against than the chance of a bullet or the sword.

These bands occupied Reserves on the south side of the Saskatchewan River about twenty miles above Battleford. The ambassadors found that Moo-so-min had already skipped, so they scoured the country and collected a great many of the retiring Indians' cattle to drive over to the camp. With Kah-pit-ik-koo they were more fortunate. They caught him just as he was getting ready to leave. To their invitations, the chief returned an evasive answer. He said he would consult his men. To save the chief trouble and to provide an incentive to change of heart, Poundmaker's men rounded up all the cattle they could find belonging to Kah-pit-ik-koo and started them off to the big camp. No sooner had these militant apostles disappeared than Kah-pit-ik-koo's people hastily got their few portable possessions together and hurried down to the crossing of the river. Here they found the Moo-so-min outfit engaged in getting their goods and themselves over to the north side of the Saskatchewan and safety. The ice had not yet all gone out but was in its last stages. They had no ferry or boat, and the task presented difficulties and dangers that none but an Indian could tackle. However, they all managed to cross, with the loss of only an animal or two, when, each band with its own objective in view, struck off up north. Moo-so-min stayed in retirement till the trouble was over but the other chief saw his good

resolutions vanish one by one, at the pressure of hunger, and in a short time he turned up in camp.

After the Halfbreeds came over, quiet reigned. The Indians had taken all the flour and bacon from the storehouses on all the Reserves before leaving, but that amounted to very little among so many as there was never any great stock kept on hand. Nothing in the way of food was looted from the stores in Battleford, so that the whole camp depended on beef, and, while ownership was not without meaning in the camp, yet possession had still greater force. Cattle would always stray; the boldest would venture farthest in hunting them. These facts and others led to great disparity of well-being amongst the Indians. Some had all the beef they liked to kill, while others had to live almost by begging. Poundmaker had not taken an article from the stores in town; he had nothing from the stocks of provisions on the Reserves. His dignity prevented him from engaging in the scrimmages for loot, and his position as head man could not be taken advantage of to acquire even necessities. Yet he was well supplied by voluntary contributions.

It can be readily understood that the question of ownership of cattle gave rise to many disputes—even quarrels—in the camp, and there would have been many more had it been possible to distinguish ownership by the taste of beef. Beef, of course was almost the only food. I do not think I tasted bannock six times during the six weeks' adventure, and no salt. This condiment, which I thought indispensable up to this time, I soon found could with advantage be done without. Tobacco, too, was scarce. An old woman, whom we had christened Biddy when she worked for us at Red Pheasant's occasionally gave me a little, and on that little I had to rely till the end of the Rebellion.

About once a week, camp would be moved but never very far and always in sight of the creek. I was assigned a small tent that was always pitched near the chief's and I did not, during the first stages, hear much of what was going on since I stayed inside most religiously so as to be as inconspicuous as possible. I did hear, however of the killing of Frank Smart. Two Indians were prowling along by the river bank about three miles from town, when they heard the beat of horses' footsteps. Hastily they sought shelter under the bank, which there borders the road, at only a few yards distance. Thus hidden, they saw two horsemen riding up. They fired and one drooped and gradually fell, while his horse galloped on. The Indians

did not venture up to inspect the fallen man but came home the shortest way, rather awed by their successful audacity. The event was not paraded at all, owing, I believe to fear of the consequences when the accounting should be made. After things had quietened down, the man who did the killing ran off across the Line, disbelieving that the white man would call this killing different from ordinary murder.

It was only a short time after the camp assembled that other messengers came from Duck Lake with a letter from Riel. Poundmaker called me in one day and told me that a council was to be held that afternoon to hear what these men had to say. After all had seated themselves one of the Halfbreeds rose and read the letter, afterwards giving a translation in Cree. The large soldier's tent was the meeting place, the Indians squatting on the ground round the edge and listening to the visitor's account of matters at Duck Lake. One little incident which they related though trifling, struck me as very peculiar. During the fight, they said, Riel stood with a man on either side, each holding up one of Riel's arms. While the arms were up, the Halfbreeds prevailed, when the arms sagged down, the police had the best of the fight. The messengers' accents were tinged with awe as they told this story and they seemed to believe it, but I do not think the Indians were affected at all, except in the way of curiosity. Poundmaker had asked me to come along with him to this meeting. He sat opposite to the Halfbreeds and I crouched down beside him. One Indian after another would rise and ask a question, which the Halfbreeds would answer discursively and at length. After the letter had been read and explained to the gathering, it was handed to Poundmaker. Arrived at his own tent, the chief pulled out the epistle, gave it to me and asked me what was in it. He did not place implicit faith in Riel's emissaries. The letter was in French which, at any rate as far as the written or printed language is concerned, I am not unacquainted with. I translated the letter for him, substantially as the Halfbreeds had given it. He asked me what I thought of it. I said it read as though the Duck Lake people wanted help. Poundmaker made no remark but I could see that the idea was not at all to his fancy. The first messengers had conveyed the impression that Riel and his Duck Lake following were going to carry all before them, and that the Indians' part was to sit quietly by, and yet participate in the benefits to result. Also, nothing had been heard from other parts of the country—and much had been expected—from the west, from the north and from the

Blackfeet. The worst was to be anticipated from this ominous silence.

It was at one of these temporary camps that Little Pine died. He had not taken any prominent part in the proceedings because he had no faith in the promised end, but he had not the power to curb his people and would not disassociate himself from them. He was not ill long, which gave rise to the rumor that he was poisoned, a rumor that I cannot think deserves the slightest credit. Indeed, I am of the opinion that this was rather a suggestion of the white man, since it is more in line with our habit of thought than with the Indians'.

At this juncture occurred an incident that only good fortune prevented being an event. Some of Red Pheasant's band had taken to the woods rather than join the rebels, and from there a young man came to visit the camp. He came to see me and in my constant state of suspicious apprehension it appeared like the arrival of a long lost friend, because I had been very intimate with him while on Red Pheasant's Reserve. We talked over matters without reserve and I advised him to stay in the bush, as the end could not be far off. He seemed to accept my diagnosis and proposed that we go along to the tent of another Red Pheasant Indian and tell him about it. We went to the tent, entered and sat down. I have already explained, I think, that the confidence of the Indian is a possible attainment to all those who manifestly interest themselves in his behalf—except employees of the Indian Department. These appear in no way or degree able to break down the barrier of suspicion that comes between; they are the instruments through whom the Indians are to be brought into servitude. It will be understood, therefore, that the Red Pheasant Indians, among whom I had lived for six years, teaching school, regarded me as a proven friend, indeed, some of them, a companion. When we sat down, then, in Pee-ay-chew's tent, I felt all the confidence that one knows only with friends; a confidence warmed up by the inspiring change of atmosphere. A strange Indian was there and he was reeling off to a number of Red Pheasant Indians, who sat round the tent—a big one—an account of the doings at Duck Lake and round Batoche and outlining Riel's plans for the future. First, the railroad was to be broken up, so that no assistance could come from the East; then all the police in the West—"caught like fish in a weir"—were to be cleaned up. Riel would start at Prince Albert and march up the Saskatchewan River, taking the various posts on his way. The Blackfeet were to attend to the South. After

all vestiges of government were wiped out, the United States authorities were to be called to a conference somewhere on the plateau, near the South Branch. Arrangements would there be made for the disposal of the country in which the interests of the original inhabitants were to be adequately secured. When he had finished, the Indians discussed the matter at length, and Pee-ay-chew asked me what I thought of it. I told him that all this harangue was only a fine fairy tale; that from Riel's letter the Halfbreeds felt themselves to be losing ground and wanted the Indians' help, that the other natives of the country had evidently not risen, or they would have heard of it, that the arrival of troops was only a matter of time, and that punishment would surely follow for all those who took a conspicuous part. I was allowed to say all this without a word of interruption, but when I had ended, the strange Indian rose—his name was Jay-kee-kum—and addressing himself to me, said: "So this is the kind of man the Indians have saved alive and are keeping in their camp. Tomorrow I will call a council and tell what sort of a man you are, then we will see what they will do to you." Then he stalked out. They told me that he was one of Riel's messengers, a Duck Lake Indian.

I can find no words that adequately express my feelings at this news. I had felt frightened many times since the trouble started, but never sufficiently to lose my head. I had kept balance. But now I was paralysed as I expected the result to be my certain destruction. Pee-ay-chew soothed me somewhat by saying that he had never entirely believed the Halfbreeds' stories; Halfbreeds were liars. He had concluded, too, that help was needed at headquarters and that the letter meant that and nothing else. The other Indians expressed themselves in similar language. This talk soothed me somewhat but the next forty-eight hours were the most racking I ever spent. I was just waiting for the end. Nothing happened; I heard nothing more about it; so that after a few days my anxiety wore itself away. I have revolved this episode over and over again in my mind and have come to the conclusion that what I said was just about what most people thought and that my rash outspokenness helped rather than lowered me in their estimation.

The Indians went out scouting frequently. I heard Pound-maker giving directions to his general, Kah-me-yo-ke-sik-way-o, which is translated into Fine Day, a near approach in English—just before starting. They were not to stay in one place, but to appear quickly at spots some distance apart, to give the impression of numbers; they were to keep strict watch of the roads;

they were not to waste ammunition, as their arms were of short range compared to the soldiers'; and they were to travel at night as far as possible. On one occasion they came in contact with a section of the relief force and exchanged shots with them. One Indian was shot through the body in this encounter and afterwards died.

Two Nez Percee Indians, refugees from the United States were living on the Stony Reserve. One of these disappeared early in the disturbance and it was said in the camp that he had gone into the barracks. It appears that he had put in a good deal of his time among the police, doing little chores for them in return for his food, and this intimacy was given as reason for such deduction. However, after all was over, his body was found in the bush on the south side of the river, and nothing is known as to how he met his end. The other Nez Percee was killed just at the beginning of the Cut Knife fight, as he and a few other daredevils tried to rush the guns at the start of the battle of Cut Knife.

During the whole of the outbreak, there was no organised attempt at besieging the barracks; indeed there were not enough Indians to do it. Such men as thought fit prowled round the town at night, but at a safe distance. In the daytime when they would appear on the hills on the south side of the river they were saluted with bullets from watchers on the other side and at night they were too few to do any harm. Great consternation prevailed in the white camp but it arose altogether from the preconceived idea of Indian warfare and the barbarities that accompanied it. The Indians were not sufficiently worked up to attempt offensive measures, especially against a force as great if not greater than their own. They did not expect to have any fighting of any account to do: Riel and his Halfbreeds had undertaken that part of the business—theirs but to create a diversion. Just as little did they anticipate an attack.

BATTLE OF CUT KNIFE HILL—

Imagine, therefore, the consternation that prevailed in the camp on the memorable morning of the second of May.

Several times had the tenting place been moved since the outbreak and up to the day before the fight the Indians were camped in the valley of Cut Knife Creek, about three miles from the hill that gives its name to the place. On that day the tents were moved over the creek on to the plateau that extends to and is commanded by the hill. The country is more or less

broken by depressions that deepen into ravines as they near the creek. Poplar and willow scrub also diversify what little level ground there is and screen the coulees up to their very edges. The creek comes from the west and skirting the base of the hill, turns in a northerly direction till it meets the Battle River, three or four miles away, running through impenetrable willows the whole way. The bottom is sandy and the banks steep, so that fording is restricted to certain places.

It appears that scouts from the barracks—Halfbreeds—had spied the camp while it rested in the valley; and dreams of surprising it and ending the Indian part of the Rebellion had taken firm hold of the mind of Colonel Otter, who commanded the force that had come to the relief of Battleford. With this view he started out from town with all the men he could muster—his own force, Mounted Policemen and volunteers—with transport teams, a few mounted scouts and two guns. They travelled all night, halting only for refreshments, and arrived at the edge of the valley just before dawn, only to find nobody there. The Indian trail left no doubt as to the direction they had taken and the scouts, following it, rode up to the top of the plateau and found themselves almost in the centre of the camp, which was arranged in a semicircle facing the east, flanked by ravines on each side, and sheltered by massed poplars and willows behind.

An Indian camp can never be said to be asleep; someone or other is always prowling around; and, on this occasion, an old man, who had mounted the "Look-out of Cut Knife", just on general principle discerned, along with the rising sun, the avalanche that was bearing down on the camp. He saw the scouts ahead lining out the trail from the last camp. He saw mounted men following and he saw wagons, wagons, wagons, filled with soldiers, winding towards him from out of the distance behind. From where he stood he was visible to the whole camp, so that his alarms and demonstrations quickly roused the sleepers and, when the first soldiers came to the summit of the rise, they saw the Indians—like ants, disturbed in their hill—streaming in all directions away from the tents. The guns were quickly placed on the high ground and the whistle of shells and the rattle of the Gatling apparently cleared the front of everything moving before any opposition was encountered. The empty tents bore the brunt of the fusillade. It was not long, however, before a few Indians who had hastily armed themselves jumped on their ponies and rushed to meet the danger. The soldiers were so slow in taking advantage of their surprise

attack that their opponents succeeded in establishing themselves in a ravine that flanked the east side of the road up the hill. There, though only a few—not more than fifty—they kept up so continuous a sniping that the advance was stopped and the result practically determined. The Indians, gradually working down the ravine, improved their position till they were potting the soldiers from behind as well as from the front and the side. The guns, along with part of the force kept the mound that commands the camp but they had no enemy in front of them, and so long as they remained there, inactive, they were worse than useless, for the enemy was gaining courage. Indeed, an attempt was made by a few Indians in the first stage of the fight, to rush the guns, which, had the attacking body been stronger might very well have succeeded. One old Cree and the Nez Perce were killed in this diversion. The Cree was afterward taken away and buried by his relatives but the Nez Perce lies where he fell; a depression in the ground still marks the place.

The advance guard took up their position on the mound at the top of the road; those who followed behind were checked and finally stopped by the growing fire of the Indians, so that wagons and men were crowded on the several steps of the rising ground between the mound and the creek. From their elevation they had a fine view all around and took pot shots at the odd Indians that they caught glimpses of, but they were themselves exposed to enemy snipers and suffered considerably. One of the guns was out of commission—they had brought the wrong sized shells, it was said—and with the other they kept up a straggling fire at the Cut Knife ridge, on which the greater part of the Indians had assembled, but without doing much damage.

The advance once checked, the defenders who had been very few at first, gained both confidence and numbers; so that the ravine on the south side of the road and the willows that bordered the creek gradually became harbouring places from which a promiscuous fire was kept up on the troops. This state of affairs continued till about noon, when the troops were practically surrounded. Soon their retreat would be cut off. For ten or more hours the fight had continued and Otter had not advanced a step. Whatever he came for had not been accomplished. His men were wasting ammunition, shooting by guesswork at imaginary Indians. Every minute he stayed increased the perils of his situation. He gave the order to retreat. Up to this time, the Indians had been the greatest sufferers. Many of them were using shotguns, and even their

Winchesters, of the older types, were not effective at more than two hundred yards and the Indians' cover was further away than that, while the troops had weapons that would carry eight hundred or a thousand yards; but, when it became manifest that all hope of success was lost and the retreat began, the loss was greatest on the side of the troops. The crossing by which they had come was no longer available; the willows were full of Indians. Pushing ahead they luckily reached a ford lower down before the enemy and, crossing there in haste and disorder took the road back to town. There was no pursuit. A number of Indians had mounted and were about to start after the retreating soldiers, but Poundmaker would not permit it. He said that to defend themselves and their wives and children was good, but that he did not approve of taking the offensive. They had beaten their enemy off; let that content them. So there was no pursuit. Poundmaker had now no hope of the Rebellion succeeding.

It was just as well, otherwise very few, if any, of Otter's force would have escaped. They were forty miles from home; they were tired and disheartened; their road lay through a wilderness fashioned for ambuscades.

Had Otter followed up his advantage of surprise and come right on when he reached the top of the hill and, instead of being awed by a few casualties, pursued closely the flying enemy, there is little doubt that he would have attained his object, as, in order to protect the women and children, the Indians would have surrendered. They might even have given in if a flag of truce had been sent forward instead of a Gatling gun. If the Indians had elected to fight, he could have dispersed them by charges of horse. The weak point of the Indians' case was their anxiety to keep the fighting as far as possible from their women and children. Otter allowed them to fight on their chosen ground.

It is said that Otter had been forbidden to make any offensive movement, so he called this a reconnaissance in force. Had it proved a success, it would likely have received another name. But for the grace of God and the complaisance of Otter's Indian opponent, it would have been left to strangers to name it, for there would have been no survivors.

On that memorable morning I was wakened by the yells, by the rattling of the Gatling and the shrieking of the shells. I dressed hastily and hurried outside. All was confusion, as

people poured forth from their tents, but it was the confusion of everyone attending to his or her own business and that business was to reach some place of safety from the coming onslaught. The deep voices of the men, the sharper tones of women and the crying of children, all mingled as the crowd filed off behind the tents toward the south. They took nothing with them: the tents and their contents were left just as they stood. A wooded ravine that came up from the creek, skirted the northern base of Cut Knife Hill and lost itself in the level of the plateau. Down this depression the Indians poured and in a wonderfully short space of time were lost to sight. The Gatling gun spitted awesomely in the distance, but none of the bullets yet reached us, while the shells, whistling overhead in slow measure, fell far away in the rear.

I lost no time in getting to Poundmaker's tent. He was just performing his toilet, and appeared in no way perturbed by the unexpected attack. He told me that an old man, called Jacob—the same Jacob that I have spoken of as wanting to render me up, to the tender mercies of the two vengeful Indians—mounting the hill just at dawn, had detected the rumble of the wagons as they wound across the flat and struggled in the sand at the creek. He had roused the sleeping camp; some Stonies had rushed off to check the approaching enemy till a sufficient force could occupy the natural vantage points that abounded all round them. He donned the fur cap that he always wore and proceeded to invest himself in what looked like a patchwork quilt. In my ignorance, I ventured to ask him what it was, and my excuse for such an inopportune question is, that the garment—if it can be called a garment—had such a paltry, ordinary look, that I never connected it with the grave panoply of war. All the war-bonnets that I had seen might be tawdry, but they were barbaric, and essentially Indian. Poundmaker's expression, however, at once made me realise how flippant and hasty was my question. With great dignity he informed me that it was his war-cloak; that it rendered its wearer invisible to an enemy. Then he got up and stalked out of the tent without another word.

My mind possessed nothing like the quiet stability of his and I felt quite excited over the prospect of an end to all this wearing agitation being in sight. So, as soon as I saw his tall form mingle with and lose itself in the streaming crowd of fugitives, I hurried over to the Halfbreed tents, which stood at a short distance, grouped together at the end of the semicircle of teepees. There I found a very animated discussion going on

as to the chances of the day, but they did not allow their interchange of views to delay their preparations for flight from the danger zone.

I may remark that I had by this time got quite chummy with the Halfbreeds. They were in a different class from the Indians, and there were many points on which we were in sympathy. Had they really been rebels, I would have felt much safer, because then they would have been able to control the Indians, and prevent any sudden outbreak that might at any time occur in such an irresponsible crowd. I would often go over to their tents, to hear what was going on. I will also record my opinion that very few of them were in sympathy with the Rebellion, and I had ample means of finding out.

While we summed up the pros and cons of the situation, an Indian rode up and asked us why we were standing there inactive while the camp was being attacked. He said help was needed in the ravine to the left of the trail up the hill. No one answered him, and after gazing at us long enough to get the atmosphere, he told us to lose no time and rode off at a gallop. This man, Mis-ut-im-was, was one of the three Indians wounded in the fight. A bullet went clean through his abdomen, but he recovered quickly and without any difficulty. I afterwards asked him how he managed to escape the ill consequences of such a wound, one which I had always heard mentioned as most dangerous. He replied that Indians were always very careful to eat sparingly in prospect of fighting, as then a ball would go right through without piercing the intestines. Of the other two casualties, one was shot through the leg, a trivial hurt, the other had his ankle shattered, which proved a permanent maim.

Four of us, when the Halfbreeds had left, went to a ravine, a little distance on our left and lay down just over the edge, among the brush. Here we stayed for hours, one or the other occasionally rising to peep over the top of the bank, to mark any change or progress in the fight. The inequalities of the ground did not allow much to be seen, but one could hear that the shooting was always centred in the mound on which the soldiers had first taken their stand. About noon, or after, someone said the soldiers were coming; were about to charge; he heard them shouting: "Come on, boys!" This was a signal for us to move on, as the place where we were was likely to become uncomfortable. Up the ravine we went, away behind the deserted tents, without any doubt that the attacking force was

now about to charge and would eventually become masters of the camp.

The firing had long since ceased, and the sun was getting low when we turned in towards the hill, whither we had seen the Indians streaming in the morning. The hill is just the culminating point of a ridge which slopes down to the south, and here the people were all assembled. Some of the tents stood ready for occupation; the rest were in course of erection, and everywhere fires blazed, and kettles boiled in preparation for the evening meal. I made my way to Poundmaker's tent, which was already established. He had doffed his war panoply, had regained his unrestrained demeanor, and talked quite good humoredly. He asked me where I had spent the day and I recounted events faithfully to him. At mention of our flight, up the coulee, he laughed and said that many others had run away, and some had got such a fright that they had not yet returned. Other Indians came in after supper and the fight was fought over again.

The Stonies, or rather some of them—had met the first onslaught, but were quickly recruited by Crees, mostly young men, they said, without any previous experience of fighting. Not more than fifty altogether, had taken part in the battle. This was excusable since few were decently armed, and the weapons and numbers and tactics of their enemy were new to them. As soon as the guns reached the top of the ridge, a rush had been made on them; it had nearly succeeded, and caused the loss of two men. Soon the two sides settled down to sniping, each from his own side of the ridge potting at each other, till the retreat began. By this time the Indians had worked round on three sides of the troops, and wrought great havoc, buzzing about like disturbed wasps till the enemy were well started on their journey home. A number of the Indians wished to follow up their advantage, and had got on horseback ready to pursue and harass the enemy on their journey, but Poundmaker dissuaded them.

Six men, on the rebel side made "the supreme sacrifice", to adopt the euphemism of the present day. The exploits were gone over with individual embellishments, and I got the impression that there had been awful slaughter. Each had knocked over two or three of his adversaries. The chief had stationed himself on the hill, in full view of the combat but about a mile away, where his faith in the protection of his war-cloak was not disturbed by test.

The night was far advanced when the camp at last settled down, but peaceful sleep was a stranger thenceforth. "The soldiers are coming"—was the alarm given every night. Wagons would be heard rumbling. Then would ensue a vigil, waiting for what never happened. Camp was moved frequently—perhaps every other day—to the south side of Cut Knife Creek, where steep and brush-clothed coulees broke up the bare and level plateau, and afforded nests from which attack could be repelled.

Two messengers from Big Bear arrived the day after the fight but I did not hear what was the object of their visit. Riel also sent a delegation with a pressing message to join him at Duck Lake at once. These were quite a different type of man from the arrivals hitherto, and their bearing and words restored confidence and gave a respectable tone to the whole proceedings. But they could not disguise the fact that Riel was now getting the worst of it, and that help was urgently needed.

All idea of a successful termination of the rising was now at an end. I was asked what the government would do to the Indians when peace was restored, and I was careful to impress upon them that they would not all be massacred, as they were inclined to think. I said that those who had committed the murders would be hanged and the heads of the movement put in prison, but that the mass of the people would be sent back on to their Reserves and things go on as before.

START FOR DUCK LAKE—

The question as to what should be their next step now agitated the camp. They could not hold their present position indefinitely; they would be starved out, if not conquered. (That they could be beaten fighting, they found hard to believe.) They must move in some direction. Here division came in. The body of the people now only wanted to get out of the mess in the easiest way possible. Others, including Poundmaker and some other prominent men, held that the proper course was to make for the hilly country round Devil's Lake and, if pressed too hard, take refuge with the Blackfeet where Poundmaker was sure of sanctuary. Things came to a head when the dissidents hitched up and were leaving the camp. But the "soldiers" stepped in here, and turned the horses' heads from the west, herding the discontents along with the main body which thus began its pilgrimage towards Duck Lake to join Riel. Their view was to have the whole business settled one way or the

other in the shortest possible time. The disputants came with in an ace of fighting, but the numbers were too disproportionate.

Off towards the east we went, keeping to the rough, broken country that borders the prairie. On the second day, when abreast of the town, just where the road winds off to the south and Swift Current, the advance came unexpectedly on three scouts. Two of these made off too quickly for pursuit, but the horse of the third somehow got away from him, so he took his stand on a little knoll and opened battle. The Indians would have been only too glad to take him prisoner, and attempts were made, by displaying a white flag, to get him to render himself up, but these approaches he either misunderstood or despised, for he made things so hot for the Indians, that they had to surround him and shoot him. It never occurred to them to let him alone. These facts only came out later; when the firing began everybody made for the nearest shelter—some depression in the ground, brush, or anything that afforded a hiding place. From these we emerged when the shooting stopped, to find that what was only an encounter with scouts had been mistaken for an enemy in force.

Hardly had the excitement caused by this incident faded when we had a second thrill. Again all sought cover. It was an eventful day. A train of freighters, bringing provisions from Swift Current to Battleford ran right into our long-strung-out line. One or two of them managed to cut their horses loose in time to get away and no one tried to follow them. The remainder had to give themselves up. They had no escort and were in no position to dispute the possession of their loads. They were so frightened, naturally, at what might happen to them at the hands of the Indians, that they were pressing all the little valuables they had on those Indians they thought most conspicuous, with a view of placating them. One young fellow showed me a watch he had received from a freighter. I told him he had better give it back or he would get into trouble when the reckoning came, but he said he had not asked for the watch; it was a present, and that he would keep it. After the trouble was over he was sent to jail for three months and had to restore the "present". The same fate befell every recipient of a present, where he could be identified. This capture was quite a windfall for the camp, for from this time till the end, our fare was varied by corned beef and hard-tack. I had eaten no bread since the trouble began and hard though

the biscuits were I relished them. They found little favor with the Indians, however.

On the evening of the next day, we found ourselves at what was called "the end of the hills", that is, where the broken ground gives place to open, and more or less level, prairie. Here, a rider came in hot haste from Duck Lake with news of the fighting there. He said that a desperate battle was in progress, that the Halfbreeds had kept their enemies at Fish Creek for three days but had been forced back to Batoche to make their last stand. They must have help at once or it would be no use. The Indians were far from unanimous as to the course to be pursued. We did not move.

COLLAPSE OF THE REBELLION—

A day or so after the first messenger, there came two other messengers from Riel. They brought news of the fight at Batoche, of the surrender of the Halfbreeds and the end of the armed rising down there. They furthermore requested—and advised—the Indians to make terms, and bring peace to the suffering country. A big council meeting was held at which the Halfbreeds set forth every argument in favor of the course they advised. The body of the Indians—excepting the few that had wished to secede—listened with all readiness to a proposal that coincided with their hearty desire. Those who had taken prominent parts in the rising held back for a short time, but were at length persuaded to fall in with the popular wish. Poundmaker called me into a tent in which were gathered a number of the principal men and asked me what I thought would be done to them. I told them that I thought only the Stoney murderers would be hanged and that he and some others would get off with terms in prison, but that all others would go free. This would have been harder to tell, but that they appeared to expect that they would all be massacred. They resolved to accept their fate for the sake of the rest of the people.

My services were requisitioned and I wrote a letter at their dictation, asking General Middleton on what terms he would receive their capitulation. An Indian was named to accompany me, and I was to go to Duck Lake, deliver the letter to the General and bring back his answer. We started accordingly, early the next morning, quite a company, several Halfbreeds—among them the man Joubert, that I have mentioned—and Indians, on a visit, the two who had brought the message to the camp, and my companion and myself. Some rode on horseback; others footed it, my colleague and myself among the

latter. Right across country we went, heading straight for Duck Lake. These natives spent their lives in travelling, had names for a great many prominent places, and landmarks, and, even without the inherited instinct for direction which they possess, have only to go from one known point to another in crossing the country. We camped at a point of bush for which they had a designation, lighted a fire, made tea to wash down the government hard-tack and canned beef, then, disposing ourselves on severally selected soft places, lay down and talked till overcome with sleep. Even the most lethargic person does not care to lie on the hard ground any longer than is absolutely necessary, so that we rose bright and early next morning and after another frugal repast resumed our journey, reaching the first houses of the settlement next afternoon. Here the party separated, my guide and I being invited to stay right there. The people—Halfbreeds—had a decent enough dwelling and had probably been in fairly good circumstances before the trouble, but now even those who had been best off had nothing left and must begin all over again. Hard-tack and canned beef however were in evidence, thanks to the lavishness with which the conquerors were supplied, and the carelessness of those who dispensed or freighted the rations.

General Middleton had gone to Prince Albert but our new friends took such an interest in our mission that they rustled up a pony and buckboard for us to continue our journey with. The troops had also left the district as there appeared to be no spark left of the conflagration. The Halfbreeds had been only too glad to end a conflict that was hopeless from the beginning. There was quite a decent trail from Duck Lake to Prince Albert and we made the journey in a day. But we did not catch Middleton: he had started for Battleford in the steamer. Our mission, however, was too important to be neglected so the officer in charge made haste to procure for us transport up the trail to try to catch the boat when it got to Carlton. In this we were successful, by means of the hard-driving police. The steamer was taking in wood at Carlton when we drove down the hill, so that in no time we were ushered into General Middleton's presence. I delivered the letter. He said he would grant no terms to rebels but demanded unconditional surrender. He committed his ultimatum to writing and gave me the letter to deliver to Poundmaker. The Indians must come in to Battleford, bring in their arms and make submission, or he would turn his army loose on them and destroy them. This was as expected, indeed it was just what the Indians looked for, ex-

cept, perhaps that it was rather roughly put. The General asked if there was anything he could do for me, but, when I told him that my most pressing need was a pair of boots—for I was practically barefoot—he said he was not in a position to help me.

From Carlton, the Indian and I made our way back to the camp. A meeting was called and I read the letter, or rather interpreted it to the assembled Indians. Although the terms were just what the Indians had anticipated, the tone was threatening and our news did not raise the gloom that clouded the camp. The letter was indefinite as to how they would be treated. The General might merely be laying a trap to get the Indians together at his mercy, when he would turn the cannon on them. It was asking them to put great trust in hands that had not yet proved worthy of confidence. White men were tricky. They never kept their word, and so on.

But there was no help for it. It had to be done, and the cavalcade turned reluctant steps toward the appointed meeting place. Those who were expecting to be made the scapegoats were much tempted to fly; only shame prevented them, and the thought that their delinquency might be visited on the helpless body of the people. But the decision hung on a string, almost till we got to town.

The last camp was made at the foot of the Eagle Hills, eight or ten miles out. It was a sad camp; gloom of the deepest clouded every face; all conversation was direful speculation as to the form the General's vengeance would take; they were to be disarmed so as to be completely at the soldiers' mercy. The guns and rifles were loaded into two wagons for transport into town, and a miscellaneous assortment they were. Every kind of firearm ever sold by the Hudson's Bay Company since they came to the North-West up to Sniders looted from the white men, flint locks, sixteen bore single barrellled, double barrellled, eight and fourteen shot Winchesters, were included in this delivery. Along with these two wagons—some riding on horseback, some walking and some driving, came the whole body of men to make their surrender. A halt was called in the sand hills just south of the town, partly to enable the laggards to catch up, and partly that all might be cautioned against talking too much.

The flat between the Battle River and the barracks was covered with the tents of the soldiers—a most imposing array—and into the midst of these, the Indians were to wend their way. Quite a large concourse of people were on hand to take

in the spectacle, but there was nothing in the appearance of the Indians—except their unusual numbers—to indicate that they were conquered suppliants for peace. Their bearing did not lack dignity; they appeared quite unconcerned—some even had a truculent look. Nothing, in short, was provided on the part of the Indians to give the event the character of a show. Poundmaker and the principal men led the way, and were directed to General Middleton's tent. The front of the tent was thrown aside and the general came into view and seated himself in the opening, while the Indians squatted on the grass in a semicircle before him.

POUNDMAKER'S SURRENDER—

Poundmaker rose and came forward to accost the General, holding out his hand but Middleton waved aside the proffered salute saying that he did not shake hands with rebels. The Indian gathered his blanket around him and resumed his seat, while Middleton proceeded to reprimand him for taking up arms and murdering innocent settlers. The chief replied that he had murdered nobody; that he had defended himself when attacked, which he thought he was entitled to do; but they now came to give themselves up; the General had them in his hands and could work his will on them. All that the Indians asked was that the women and children might go unharmed. When the chief got through, the two Stoney murderers came forward one by one and confessed their guilt, making some sort of excuses for themselves. The General ordered these into custody, along with Poundmaker and a few others and told the rest to go back to their Reserves.

When this part of the ceremony was over, the civilians crowded round, seeking out the individuals who had stolen horses or other property from them at the outset of the trouble. The freighters also came to claim what had been stolen from them when the provision train was taken on the prairie. All those accused of any breach of the peace were gathered in and confined in the barracks. Not all those complained of were guilty, but that was not a time when innocence served as a defence; they were all condemned and sent to jail, till the Indian began to realise that "peace" meant merely substituting one kind of warfare for another and that in the legal strife he had no means either of striking back or defending himself.

The two murderers were afterwards hanged along with the men guilty of the atrocities at Frog Lake. These murderers all voluntarily surrendered themselves to the authorities; had

they chosen to evade punishment for their crimes, it is more than doubtful that they would ever have been caught. Several of the Halfbreeds from Bresaylor were also made prisoners as rebels, but there was not a scrap of evidence against them and as they were not tried till some time after, when the excitement had died down considerably, they were acquitted. Poundmaker was tried and sentenced to three years, but his term was commuted and he returned home before his time expired. He lived only a short time after his release. While on a visit to the Blackfeet, he is said to have drunk a bottle of painkiller, which brought on a vomiting of blood from his stomach and so caused his death. All the other Indian prisoners served only part of their time, a conciliation which was said to be due to their embracing Christianity.

Those Indians accused of murder were tried at Battleford. An incident connected with their execution is worth relating. Disposal of the bodies was let by contract but, when it came to the matter of placing the bodies in coffins or boxes, the contractor objected to handling them. This, of course, was to prove his conformity to the prevailing antagonism to "rebels". The conflict between duty and inclination was compromised by his placing the boxes below the scaffold, so that when he cut the ropes by which they were suspended the dead Indians dropped into their respective "caskets". Then they were hauled to the bank of the river and buried in the sand.

Several of those implicated in the Frog Lake rising made their way across the Line and lived in safety in Montana. After the surrender in Battleford, several Indians of Poundmaker's band, apprehending that the arrests might end in including everyone that had taken part in the fighting, departed for the States. One or two afterwards returned home but most of them remained there.

After the taking of Batoche, Louis Riel disappeared from the white man's ken. He was sought, but not with the untiring activity that would have actuated the seekers had the country not been so unsettled. The war, it is true, was over, but the spirit that brought on the fighting still rested in the minds of both sides, and as there was nothing to stop the disgruntled member of the losing side taking a pot shot at any too adventurous hunter, so also there was reason that the victors, no matter how anxious to take the arch-rebel, should be guided by precautionary knowledge of that fact. But he was sought, and eventually taken. Riel claimed to have surrendered him-

self, which was likely enough, when it is considered how easily he could have escaped across the Line. He was tried at Regina, by a jury of his peers, brought from Red River for that purpose. After a long and hard fight, in which his defenders in default of any other appreciable extenuation, endeavoured to prove him insane, he was found guilty, and sentenced to the death penalty. He earnestly repudiated the idea of insanity. When his eccentricities were brought to the notice of the Court—his assumption of the role of prophet and pretensions to Divine inspiration—he contended that he, in common with all other men, had faith in coincidences, and that, if he appeared inspired or a prophet, it only meant that his interpretation of auguries was clearer and better than is general. He said that his peculiarities were only those incidental to his situation. He had been called on for help and had responded to the call. Up to the moment of his execution he expected a reprieve; indeed many people thought he would never be hanged, but the law was allowed to take its course, and he died at Regina gaol.

I had opportunity of observing him whilst he was being tried. He was of medium height and slightly built. His face was the face of an enthusiast, calm and self-possessed, with brown beard and long, curly, brown hair—altogether quite a taking personality.

Riel died and the Rebellion was ended, but so strong was the impression among the Halfbreeds and French that the government dare not hang him, that his death was not credited. Even when the lapse of time and repeated evidences of his execution brought them at last to accept the truth many consoled themselves with the assurance that he had promised to rise again.

Now that the Duck Lake rebels and Poundmaker's outfit were safely disposed of, there remained no other obstacle to peace but Big Bear.

FROG LAKE MASSACRE.—

Since there were Halfbreeds at Duck Lake who could write and others scattered over the country who were able to read, it is quite understandable that natives in all parts of the country were kept tolerably well informed as to the progress of the agitation at headquarters. These men have been called spies of Riel, but it is difficult to see that they were anything more or less than people who had an interest in the result of the movement and kept in touch with what was going on.

There were such men in the Fort Pitt district during the winter of 1884 and 1885. They received the news from Duck Lake, and naturally spread around such information as came to them. As has been said before, there are many Halfbreeds who live on the Reserves and take treaty, through whom everything that happened or was expected to happen was passed on to the Indians. No spics were therefore necessary to keep Big Bear informed of events, nor did he and his band need any incitement to throw their weight on to Riel's side when they heard of the fight at Duck Lake.

After the trouble at Poundmaker's in '84, Big Bear's band went back to Frog Lake. While summer lasted they could manage to exist on what the country afforded and fortune brought them, but winter brought privation in every form. They knew nothing about trapping; they could not fish; they could not hunt. Of the resources of the country, familiar to Wood Indians, they could not take advantage. What little food they obtained was hardly earned by cutting wood or freighting and they were not adepts at either. They could get nothing from the government. No wonder they drank in greedily the development of Riel's plans—since any change must be for the better—and impatiently awaited the day when they might pay the white man for all they had suffered. They were a wild lot—the scum of the country—and liable to go to extremes.

Immediately after the outbreak at Battleford, two Indians took horse and sped to Frog Lake to enlist Big Bear and his following in the new enterprise. The chief himself was old—too old either to lead or restrain his men. The worst element took command and, casting aside all restraint, killed the agent, interpreter, farming instructor, and six others, including two priests. The employees of the Hudson's Bay Company were the only men they spared, a fact which speaks volumes. The Indians persist in saying that Quinn was bidden go to the camp but he refused and became the first victim. Once started the ferocity of the Indians knew no bounds. A few, bold, blood-thirsty villains overawed the camp.

The agency and the stores were now looted and plans made for besieging Fort Pitt, where a small detachment of police was stationed. Apart from having an official title, this place was no more a fort than any three or four houses built together constitute a fort. There were no defences, as no attack was ever anticipated. The Indians, a little cooler now, hesi-

tated to attack it and compromised by allowing the police to evacuate the place. These went down the river on a scow and came to Battleford.

Thereafter, the Indians danced away their days and nights and feasted on the government cattle. But the hand of fate was on them. General Strange, at the head of the Alberta field force, marching from Calgary, was already on their heels and came upon them at Frenchmen's Butte. It was a drawn battle and Strange had to retire for reinforcements, but the Rebellion was at an end so far as Big Bear's band was concerned. General Middleton from Battleford, joined forces with Strange and pursued the flying, disheartened Indians for a short time, when they split up into small bands and were lost in the wilderness. The prisoners were released and, one by one, the various bands gave themselves up and were disarmed. Big Bear with a few of his followers continued his way eastward and was finally taken near Carlton on the Saskatchewan River.

The old chief was tried at Regina on a charge of treason felony and found guilty—probably because he was unable to stop the rising, because he certainly had no voice in the matter—and sentenced to three years at Stoney Mountain. While incarcerated there, he and Poundmaker submitted to the ceremony of baptism and for their exemplary conduct, were released and returned home. But their spirits were broken and both succumbed before they really realised their freedom.

It is a matter of no importance, further, perhaps than as an illustration of ignorance, but it is difficult to understand how a charge of treason could be fastened on an Indian. They are not subjects of the Crown, but allies, and a treaty was made with them as such. True, they broke that treaty, but treaties are abrogated every once in a while by civilised nations, without the determination being treated as rebellion. There must be some way out of this difficulty, but that way will always remain to me one of the mysteries of the law.

TRIALS AT REGINA—

I was summoned to Regina as a witness on the trials. The nearest railway was Swift Current, and a Halfbreed named Bird was hired to transport me to that station. This was one of the men who brought me up from Red River to Saskatchewan. He had a good team, and we made the trip in five days; from there to Regina is only a short journey by railway. Arrived there, I quickly found that some one with "pull" had the



BIG BEAR IN CHAINS

(From Canon Matheson's collection)

contract for boarding all witnesses. There was no choice. Not that any particular fault could be found with the accommodation but the compulsion was galling and illustrative of conditions at the time.


I was called to prove the letter sent by Riel to the Half-breeds of the Battleford district. As I have already stated, I not only heard the letter read by one of those who brought it to the camp, but had read it myself. Its contents have before been given. It connected Riel up with the Indian uprising. It was in French and proved the cause of a little diversion in court. The counsel for the accused doubted my ability to translate French into English, a doubt in which my modest endeavours to explain the limits of my knowledge encouraged him; he pressed me till I got annoyed and encouraged his doubts, but the laugh was on him when I proceeded to translate, first literally and then freely the simple letter.

I was also a witness against Poundmaker but, so far as my personal knowledge went there was as much to assert in his favor as there was against him. He was undoubtedly the chief and as chief was held responsible both for what he did and for what he could not prevent. What he did prevent was not allowed to palliate his offence nor mitigate the sentence. The rancour of public opinion did, indeed, die down in a year or so and all the prisoners were released, so that no great harm was done, but it remains a melancholy fact that at that time no charge could be laid against any Halfbreed or Indian in which the accused had the slightest chance of escape, no matter what the evidence might be.

The trials were spread over about two months, with varying intervals between. When all were over, the "pull" was again in evidence. Instead of allowing the witnesses to travel back home in their own way, the "contract" was given to a dexterous wire puller to transport us by team across country. We had to pay, of course, and reached home all right, but the domineering interference was irritating and kept us twice as long on the road as we would otherwise have been.

AFTER THE REBELLION—

The Rebellion was over, but it still remained for the losing side to taste the humiliation of the vanquished, and pay the penalty of their rashness. They were helpless and unarmed, so that there was nothing to be feared from them; they were rebels and could be robbed without compunction and with impunity. In this, many in the highest positions set the example and little

bands of soldiers and armed civilians scoured the country in search of loot. Whatever of value they found, was appropriated as spoils of war. The detachments of volunteers that remained stationed in Battleford until fall started home so loaded with impedimenta that much had to be abandoned on the road to the railway.

The Bresaylor Halfbreeds had quite large herds of cattle; what the Indians did not steal was afterwards requisitioned for feeding the troops. Everything they had that was worth taking was summarily confiscated. One of them, a trader, was robbed of his winter's accumulation of furs—fifty thousand dollars worth. Years after, this matter was brought up in the House, after 1896, and the victim received part payment for his losses, while the ringleaders in the orgy of spoliation were exposed.

The Indians had been ordered back to their Reserves, till their fate should be decided on. They were strictly forbidden to pass their respective boundaries and, as a further restraint on wandering, their ponies were taken from them. But, before this was done, a number got so worked up with apprehension, that they "hit the trail" for Montana. The Stonies went West. Those who stayed at home were left to their own resources. While summer lasted, this was no great hardship, since Indians can get along in summer without resources but, when winter came they had a hard time. Fortunately, rabbits were extraordinarily numerous and arrows served to shoot them with. Their guns were gone. Occasionally one or other would be arrested in connection with the looting of settlers' effects, while those that remained would await their turn. They had not been officially informed as to their fate, and, indeed would not have placed implicit confidence in anything they were told. They expected the worst. If they possessed anything that was worth having—as curios, beadwork, and so on—it was appropriated if it caught the eye of the victors.

The following spring, the Indian Department took hold again. They recognised no responsibility, for the Indians had broken the treaty and were subjected to the most severe discipline. They might not leave the Reserve without a permit and, their horses having been confiscated, they could no longer eke out a living by selling wood in town. But the restrictions were gradually allowed to lapse. Oxen and cows were loaned by the department to those who might be expected to make good use of them. These or their equivalent were eventually to be returned to the government. Treaty money was cut off for sever-

al years, but that too, lasted only a short time, payments being resumed after a few years.

Indeed the Rebellion marked the turning point in both of the parties to the treaty. Most of the wild, contumacious Indians were gone—either hanged or emigrated to the States, leaving the quiet and patient to accept the inevitable. The department, too, had been awakened to the fact that something more than they had been doing was necessary, if their wards were ever to become self-supporting. There was and is improvement, but it is necessarily slow. The considerations are many and varied. The Indians have no votes and can not make themselves heard, so that all information on the subject comes from the other side. Unless news concerning them is catastrophic, it never gets into the papers. To public opinion, Indians are uninteresting.

The Rebellion also fastened the attention of the government on the contention of the Halfbreeds. Why it needed arms to bring this about is hard to say, but the fact that a Commission* was appointed to investigate the question and that their demands were practically conceded points a lamentable moral. Land Scrip—the cheapest way of satisfying their claims—was issued to all up to 1885, and it is illustrative of the Halfbreed nature, that nine-tenths of these were at once handed over to buyers—who were not Jews—at a nominal price—eighty dollars, and upwards.

Most of the old timers—Halfbreeds—or their descendants, still hold their lands on the South Saskatchewan River. They have moved with the times and appear prosperous. But there remains a considerable element that has either drifted up north to escape civilisation, or hangs round the towns, to revel in it. With these latter drink plays havoc and an accompanying improvidence is their leading characteristic.

(*A commission to remunerate Halfbreeds with a view to granting scrips was decided on in Council Jan. 28, 1885, namely before the Rebellion.)

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An Old River Cart

An old Red River cart, a tumbling barn
Where broken harness sprawls upon a beam,
And toothless harrows, lean against a wall,
With buggy tops, a broken scythe, and all
The flotsam and the jetsam of the farm.

Sun-smote, the old cart dreams with pump in air
Of creaking down from Touchwood day by day,
Or shrieking up Troy's ancient, winding trail
With twenty carts a-following its tail,
And twenty horses, twenty manes aflare.

The camp-fire smell of glowing buffalo chips,
Outspanning by the wayfaring Qu'Appelle,
The fresh baked bannock curling in the pan,
While, washing brown shreds of pemmican,
The bitter tea was sweet to thirsty lips.

Wild winds and sweet still blow the chill from dawn,
And grasses weave their sighing with the stars,
Still creak the old cart's weathered, wooden flanks,
Its tall wheels sag, the broken harness clanks,
But all the golden days upon the trail are gone.

—Janet Munro

